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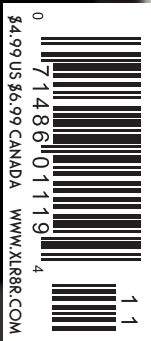
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Carl Craig demonstrates doing 'The Butt.'
PHOTO: Kiva Strygh



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ED'S RANT HOT WIRED



Keith Fullerton Whitman at the Harvard University Studio for Electro-Acoustic Composition

I know I'm not supposed to be saying this, but organizing our fourth annual Music Technology issue for the first time scared me. As a writer and a reader, I'm typically much more interested in the humans behind the machines—I care more about artists' weird quirks, their inspirations and aspirations, than what gear they use to achieve their sound. Alas, visions of trying to edit down 3,000 word interviews on the minutiae of sampling and nightmares of gear reviews crammed full of obscure terms danced in my head.

But I was wrong to think music tech might not be interesting, and I'm not afraid to admit it. The raw fact is that some of the most gripping and interesting parts of this issue involve artists getting down to brass tacks about why and how they use the equipment they do. I became absorbed with Ladytron's explanation of how they make analog synths and guitar sounds appear interchangeable. Writer Cameron Macdonald was totally stoked after he caught Keith Fullerton Whitman on the phone somewhere between Holland and Belgium; Whitman was so animated when retelling his worldwide search for the perfect synth that it reminded Macdonald of the wave-obsessed surfers in *The Endless Summer*.

At the end of the day, it's always interesting to hear people talk passionately about what they love, whether it be the new version of Live or just a good hooded sweatshirt (as in the case of Why?'s Yoni Wolf).

It also occurred to me—somewhere in between my 11 p.m. phone interview with hip-hop producer Sleeper and tweaking punctuation on the Jackson piece—that music-making gear is less daunting than ever. Hardcore programming heads can keep busy delving ever further into Max/MSP and Logic, but it's just as plausible to make an entire album with a four-track and a Casio keyboard, or maybe a sampler and a cracked copy of ProTools, or even a Playstation. The idea that there are plenty of tools to express your creativity, but no one right way, is insanely liberating.

To date, quite a bit of electronic music has focused on the overwhelmingly white European male experience. No doubt the increased democracy of resources—along with the availability of low-cost (and even free) music-making tools—will spur a ton of new sounds and forms of electronic music from further afield. Trinidadian grime? Johannesburg jawns? Pakistani minimal techno? I can't wait to see what happens in the next few years, especially as subsequent generations raised with computers and computer music come of age.

But enough of my rambling. You have an issue to read. And whether you're a DJ, producer or just an avid listener, I can't wait for you to find inspiration within these pages.

—Vivian Host, Editor



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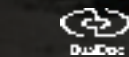
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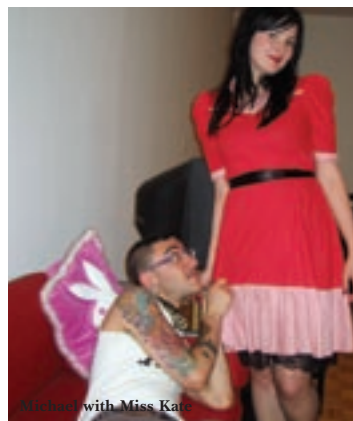


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Michael Cohn with Miss Kat

MICHAEL COHN

Michael "Jazz Hands" Cohn grew up in Bologna, Italy, where he developed a taste for hardcore shows, skinny suspenders and pointy shoes. These days, he lives in New York City, where he recently graduated from FIT. When he's not serving electro-house dancefloors citywide, promoting the Cut NYC parties with his partner-in-crime Patrick "The Captain" Rood or styling fashion shoots (like this issue's "Nouveau Riche," page 38), Cohn can be found grossly overusing the words "ill," "son" and "hollerrrr."

www.cutnyc.com



JUSTIN HOPPER

In Pittsburgh, salads contain French fries and they still play Screamin' Jay Hawkins on the radio—but that's not why Justin Hopper loves living there. He loves it because it's a place where one can live quite comfortably as a freelance writer, musician and DJ. His writing has appeared in *Spin*, *Salon.com* and *Paste* amongst others, for which he's talked and drank with bluegrass legends in Nashville, soccer hooligans in England and plenty of good folk in between.



JANET TZOU

After failing spectacularly at refrigerator repair school, NYC-based freelance writer Janet Tzou (pronounced "zo") tricked somebody into debuting her own jewelry designs on *Sex & The City* (peep www.babydollgems.com). When she's not debating pop culture and race with unsuspecting folk like *XLR8R*'s sagacious Tomas Palermo, Tzou fosters Asian American awareness through www.mouther.com, covers music for *Time Out New York*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *The Village Voice*, *XXL*, *Urb* and *King*, and pretends to be a corporate attorney.



RIVA SAYEGH

Detroit-based photographer Riva Sayegh is a Michigan native who has been active in the Detroit arts community as an exhibiting artist, commercial photographer and curator since she attended the College for Creative Studies, where she graduated in 1998. She also works as a medical photographer, which sometimes requires her to attend and photograph surgical procedures. Riva's work has been seen in publications including *Paper*, *Urb*, *Hour Detroit*, *XLR8R*, *Trace* and *Techno Rebels*, a book by Detroitier Dan Sicko.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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guys are covering. That section has introduced me to some artists I didn't know (like twisted-ass Jared Buckhiester) and it's always interesting to see more "established" artists' body of work in that format. I've been noticing recently though that most of that section has been devoted to "street art" or "skateboard art" and I'm getting kind of tired of it. How about putting some photographers or more leftfield people up in the mix instead of just the usual suspects?

Mark Morrison, Brooklyn, NY

Vivian responds: Thanks for your feedback on Vis-Ed. In choosing artists, we care less about what category someone belongs to (i.e. "street art") and more about whether we feel their work resonates with us and the people who read XLR8R. That said, though, we are going to be mixing up that section over the next year with people who don't just paint or draw; expect to see more women artists, toy designers and photographers contributing to Vis-Ed soon.

Model Reader

I love your magazine. In fact, it is the only magazine I can stand to read these days. Anyway, I especially enjoy your fashion sections because, like the rest of your segments, they stand out on their own in style and taste. I was wondering if there was anyway I could model clothing for your magazine. Would I have to first apply to a modeling agency or do you do your own contracting? I have included a picture just for the hell of it.

Paul Kalkin



Art Attack

I have been reading your magazine for a few years and I always look forward to flipping to the Vis-Ed section to see who you

XLR8R'S "WHAT'S YOUR NATIVE IMPULSE?" CONTEST

Win truckloads of software and CDs in one of XLR8R biggest contests ever!

Our annual Music Technology issue has always been a big deal at XLR8R. In previous years we've pulled out the stops to get cover stories on DJ Premier and Richie Hawtin. This year our trump card is an exclusive feature on influential techno artist Carl Craig, plus a truly astounding contest. German software company **Native Instruments** was founded in 1996 and has been innovating synthesis and virtual instrument software ever since. Their line-up is comprised of the ground-breaking modular sound design software **Reaktor**, synthesizers **Absynth** and **FM7**, sampling instruments **Kontakt**, **Kompakt**, **Intakt** and **Battery**, vintage emulations **Pro-53**, **B4** and **Elektrik Piano** and the revolutionary guitar studio **Guitar Rig**. NI also makes the essential digital DJ interface **Traktor DJ Studio**. If that wasn't enough, legendary jazz label **Impulse!**—home to John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie and Pharoah Sanders—has a brand new remix compilation out, **Impulsive!**, featuring reworks of classic jazz by Sa-Ra, RZA, Chief Xcel and more. In a truly "oh my god!" moment, we present the **What's Your Native Impulse?** contest—your chance to **win the entire Native Instruments software line**. First, you must answer all five of these questions correctly. One grand prize winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1. Native Instruments Battery 2 is a sampler designed for what type of samples?
2. Impulse artist Archie Shepp's song "Attica Blues" refers to what historical event?
3. NI's Electronic Instruments 2 is for use within which NI software device?
4. What European country does Impulse remix producer Gerardo Frisina hail from?
5. Name three prominent techno producers who use Native Instruments software.

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5 Runners-up will receive: *Impulsive!* and *Impulsive! Unmixed* CDs.



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Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Entries must be received by Dec 2, 2005. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Native Impulse" contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "Native Impulse" in the subject line.

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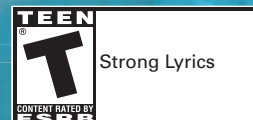
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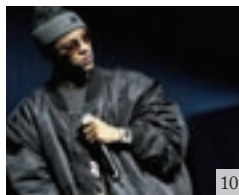
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BJ "BITTER" BASTARD: DECODING THE DIRTY SOUTH



It gets kind of hard to tell Southern rappers apart—not only are their accents thick as molasses already, but when they're mixed with liberal helpings of Robitussin and pitched down it's like trying to play "Name That Tune" after 10 nitrous balloons. Ever helpful, BJ "Bitter" Bastard has devised this guide so you can become a bit more familiar with the denizens of America's Dirty Dirty.

1. David Banner David B. has a salt 'n' pepper goatee and permanent screw face—he looks like a constipated, angry genie that someone accidentally let out of the lamp. He reps Mississippi and is often considered the "intellectual" of the bunch, but he still finds plenty of time for lyrics like "Gonna touch you toes and make me roll/and gonna hit the mall/and buy me some clothes, mang" ("Like A Pimp").

2. Slim Thug If your Southern accent is thick enough you can rhyme any word with any other word. Of course, that's easier when you favor one-syllable words like "ball" and "fall" rather than, say, "loquacious."

3. Three 6 Mafia Three 6 were the first Memphis, Tennessee rap artists to go platinum. It's no wonder as they are genius lyricists; see lines like "We eat so many shrimp I got iodine poisoning" ("Sippin' on Some Syrup") and "Eyes like a Chinese/I'm sipping on a Heinnie" ("Ridin Spinners").

4. Eightball & MJG Two thug-ass thugs from Memphis, the duo of Premro Smith (Eightball) and Marlon Jermaine Goodwin (MJG, duh) like to tell it like it is, as when they ask "Bitch, why you so jankie?"

5. Mike Jones Every one of this Houston dude's songs repeats his name so many times that you actually forget what the song is about. Our mole at MTV tells us that when she met Death Cab for Cutie, even they couldn't stop saying "Mike Jones! Mike Jones!" Jones also uses lines from one song as choruses in another song, doing with tracks what Taco Bell does with food (i.e. making 25 things from the same six ingredients).

6. Bun B Bun B is a total bad ass, and even more so because his name sounds like a new doughnut from Krispy Kreme. He is half of UGK (Underground Kingz) with Pimp C, whose name could and should be used to sell vitamin-filled grape punch to children.

7. Ying Yang Twins Despite having an album called *Me & My Brother*, D-Rocc and Kaine are apparently not related at all. Nonetheless, they share a taste for strip clubs, tacky furniture and Grey Goose. They

also have a penchant for reinventing the English language with songs like "Brang You Azz Outdoz."

8. Paul Wall If you've ever seen *Leprechaun 5: In the Hood*, then you know that Paul Wall looks like the leprechaun, except with really shiny teeth. Dude calls himself "The People's Champ" and the "undisputed king of the parking lot"—if he didn't discover hip-hop he would be selling beer can hats outside of the Houston Astrodome. Wall is also known for favoring animal metaphors, as in "Crawlin' low like a beetle/More fly than a seagull" ("Balla Talk 2").

9. Master P Master P is the preschool teacher of the genre. He really digs onomatopoeia (see "Ooohhhwee," "Oh Na Nae" and "Say Brah"), but his crowning achievement is the talking Master P doll, which says "Ugggggggh. Na na na na" when you pull its string.

10. T.I. Contrary to popular belief, T.I. doesn't stand for "tract infection"—it's a shortening of Tip (T.I.'s original name that he couldn't pronounce without it sounding like "chip" or "thip"). Hailing from Atlanta, T.I. carries on the tradition of cartoon drug dealer names—he's often known as the Rubber Band Man.



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OH-OH-OH, IT'S MAGIC!
The XLR8R crew pounded the Las Vegas pavement once again, visiting the MAGIC, Project and Pool tradeshow in an effort to divulge next year's style developments. Here's a slice of what we saw.
BACKGROUND PHOTO: MORGAN HOWLAND
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Sophie Toporkofs for 2K.



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Ladies' accoutrements by Stussy.



Puma goes off with the colorways.



Hoodie by Subscript.



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Skirt by Killah.

Onituka Tiger from A&S with classic styles and great colors.



'80s madness courtesy Boxfresh.



Insane Reebok pumps by Kenzo Minami.



WE showed off their travel-inspired line.



Syndrome's new line was out there and awesome.

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Pre-mod Triple Five Soul record boxes.

STEVE SPACEK

LONDON'S FUTURE SOUL FREQUENT FLYER MAKES A MUSICAL SHIFT.

WORDS: JUSTIN HOPPER PHOTO: SOUND IN COLOR

When it comes to musical collaborations, Steve Spacek has led something of a charmed life. From his highly regarded partnership with the band Spacek to vocals for GB and Platinum Pied Pipers, the London-born singer and producer has become synonymous with effortlessly hot future soul. So it's no surprise that when he hooked up with beat baron Jay Dee (a.k.a. J. Dilla) for a track on Spacek's first solo album, cutting a classic was kid's stuff.

"We've always respected Jay Dee and loved what he's done," says Spacek. "He went through some tracks he'd been working on, and when he landed on ["Dollar"], he knew that was it—he just looked up at me and stopped."

The resulting track sets the tone for *Space Shift*. When Spacek sings "Ya gotta let your dollar circulate," he's talking actual *blood*, letting that American optimism run through his veins and percolate out like a 21st century Curtis Mayfield, ready to "move on up." It's a change in the weather from the minimal London rain of Spacek's critically acclaimed 2003 album *Vintage Hi-Tech* to the sunny LA sci-fi soul of *Space Shift*.

"In London it's overcast," says Spacek, now transient between London, LA and Australia, where his new baby lives. "And it's underground—literally, you lock yourself away in a studio with no windows. Here, the door's open, people are coming in and out all the time, the breeze is coming through."

That cooling, unifying breeze floats through *Space Shift*, from the West Coast bounce of "Thursday" to the hotted-up futuristic Afrobeat of "Three Hours of Fun" (produced by bandmate Morgan Spacek). But besides the American influence—Mayfield, Donny Hathaway—on Spacek's vocals and MPC soul sounds, the singer brings a UK flavor to *Space Shift* with his decidedly open-minded approach.

"In America, people tend to say, 'Oh, I'm into *this* [genre] now,'" says Spacek. "The way I would listen to music in the UK, I think it's more liberated. People who've pushed boundaries [in America], like Timbaland, [are those who] go down different routes—music is perceived [that openmindedly] in the UK on a daily basis."

With tracks already under way for a new record from Spacek (the band) and Steve continually meeting new potential collaborators, expect to hear more and different sounds from the Spacek soul massive in the near future.

"We used to think that there was this niche we had, but in that niche was a whole universe," he says. "But there are places I haven't even gone to on this record that I wanna explore. And music is infinite."

Space Shift is out now on Sound in Color Records.

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THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

A new documentary chronicles the bittersweet lives of seven graffiti stars.



Top: director Doug Pray films graffiti writer Jase at a train yard in Oakland, CA (Jim Dziuria); Bottom, from left: graffiti by Toomer; graffiti writer Earsnot; wall tag by Saber in San Francisco, CA (Dustin Ashkland); graffiti writer Claw (Chris Giancy)

Unlike 1997's post-grunge rockumentary *Hype!* or 2001's turntablist chronicle *Scratch*, Doug Pray's new film *Infamy* is an intensely focused graffiti documentary. "I didn't want to make another *Style Wars*," says Pray. "I thought 'Let's just get into the heads of a few writers.' Then it became less about who they were, and more about *why* they were and what they were thinking and why graffiti is such an amazing, tormented art to be involved in."

With funding from hip-hop label Paladin Superco and curating assistance from graffiti expert/*Swindle* editor Roger Gastman, the film is beautifully clean and concise. It neither glorifies nor demonizes as it gets at the true essence of tagging; for every high-being 20 feet above LA with Saber hitting a billboard or meeting Joe Connolly, who is as dedicated to buffing as people are to painting—there is a dark side, from Toomer talking about his dead homies to Jase surmising that years of sniffing paint has fucked up his brain. We caught up with Pray at his home in Downtown LA, and asked him a few questions about the flick. *Vivian Host* *Infamy* is now showing at Resfest and will be released on a DVD by Image Entertainment in early 2006. www.resfest.com

How was the process of making *Infamy* different than your other movies? Graffiti writers are interesting characters—they really want fame, but at the same time they've always remained hidden. That required a certain intimacy; I couldn't bring a big crew and tons of lights. We shot with a Panasonic DVX—it allows you to get beautiful imagery without having a huge tripod. And working really closely with Roger was an interesting dynamic. I'm not a graffiti expert on any level and he filled me in on a really mysterious world that has lots of rules.

Name three documentary films you are really into. *The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, *Koyaanisqatsi* by Godfrey Reggio and pretty much anything Errol Morris has done.

What is the best basic gear you can buy to make your own movie? Buy or rack a Panasonic DVX 100 and Final Cut Pro editing system and invest in a really good set of microphones, including a wireless Lavalier (essential for getting good sound). Get a person who knows how to do quick, cheap and bright lighting. Talk an editor into working his ass off for an entire year. Editing documentaries is 98% of the job. That's when you figure out how to tell the story, the feel, the mood and the pacing.

Next movies? The first one is *Big Rig*; it's all about truck drivers. Then there's one about Dorian Paskowitz, a lifelong surfer who raised nine kids on the beaches of Hawaii and California—he's a legend with a remarkable family. The third one is *The Alchemist*; where I'm interviewing the most well-known and successful advertising people.

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VEV'D

BEING CROSS HAS NEVER SOUNDED SO GOOD.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTO: MIKE PARADINAS

Since moving to London from the cheery (if boring) suburbs of Maidenhead, 26-year-olds Jamie and Roly have been pissed off and broke. You might even say Vex'd. Luckily, such conditions are ideal for making sinister grime tunes, the likes of which can be found on their debut album, *Degenerate*. With horror movie strings and samples, menacing sine wave basslines and chopped breaks that are the equivalent of a baseball bat to the skull, the record makes the ultimate argument for grime as the music of a generation raised on videogames. (Not surprisingly, Roly is a videogame tester and Jamie used to poach samples from *Xenon 2* with his Amiga.)

With a hefty amount of echo effects, dancehall samples and old school bleeps and pops, *Degenerate* also nods bluntly at a youth spent listening to jungle, dark-core and dub. Jamie, who's just ducked inside from a freak rainstorm, recalls two of the moments that would eventually shape the Vex'd sound. "[The drum & bass night] Metalheadz at the Blue Note—that changed everything, especially seeing DJ Kemistry play 'Rings Around Saturn.' And there was a time Roly and I went to see Jah Shaka playing a dub set. At the time I didn't know that you could get that kind of buzz out of music that wasn't at 170bpm. It was so slow but it was so deep. You know when your eyeballs start to wobble because of the bass? It was amazing."

A love of experimental low-end—and an increasing lack of inspiration coming

from drum & bass—eventually led the Vex'd boys toward the dubstep scene, which they were introduced to through tunes by Kode 9 and Plasticman. "Around 2000, we had abandoned the idea of writing jungle, but we didn't know how to take the influences that had been given to us and make it into something else," explains Jamie. "Eventually darker garage stuff started to appear on our radar [and it was a sound] that we could relate to. [Dubstep] was just radical, minimal and free-form music."

Last year, the pair—who met through music and skateboarding at the age of 16—debuted with two twelves, "Pop Pop" and "Lion," for Bristol label Subtext (which one suspects is their own imprint). The tunes quickly became favorites with the Forward crowd and caught the attention of Mike Paradinas (u-ziq), who conscripted them to join his grime army at Planet Mu.

After months locked in the studio and the July release of *Degenerate*, you'd think Vex'd would be keen to get out and party, but there's no rest for these studio soldiers. "I love the variety of [our album]," says Jamie. "I'm pleased with its form. But most of the stuff was written six to eighteen months ago. Dubstep moves so fast and every new record that comes out signals a new possible direction for the music and a new sonic form for people to be influenced by. I just can't wait to put out some new music!"

Degenerate is out now on Planet Mu. www.planet-mu.com



Vex'd: Roly and Jamie



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NU WAVE
Electronic music is alive and kicking at Norway's Numusic Festival.

WORDS: PAUL CLARKE PHOTOS: DAVID BOWEN

Bringing musicians and artists from across the world to the Norwegian city of Stavanger for five days, the six-year-old **Numusic Festival** proved that electronic music is as healthy as any of the stunningly gorgeous Scandinavians that were in the crowd. Or Karlheinz Stockhausen, for that

matter; just a few days after celebrating his 77th birthday, the avant-garde composer performed six concerts and debuted two new works, showing that his ear for challenging soundscapes hasn't dulled with time. While performances by Biosphere and experimental whistler Goodiepal—

and the c6 collective's culture jamming in the accompanying Nuart exhibition—provided plenty of food for thought, feet weren't left hungry for action either, with Carl Craig, Xploding Plastix and Jamie Lidell getting the dancefloor pulsing like a defibrillator. Given the quality of the indig-

enous acts here—including the precision-driven minimal disco-tech of Kango's Stein Massiv and the electro-funk explosion that is Elektrofant—the one thing the Norwegian music scene certainly doesn't need is to be jolted into life.

www.numusic.no

A festival attendee; Biosphere performing live in a cathedral; one-half of the Norwegian duo Elektrofant performing live; the Norwegian coast.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING YOU'VE SEEN AT NUMUSIC?



"Goodiepal is absolutely amazing in the way he has such intimacy with his audience and encourages them to interact with him. Plus, I love his beard." **Miriam Cave, festival-goer (Norway)**



"Stockhausen felt like your brain was a billiard ball being knocked around the cosmos." **Sam Banister, VJ (UK)**



"Max De Wardener's shimmering electronica took me to the moon, and that's somewhere I've always wanted to go." **Brooks, artist (UK)**



"Nextlife, Datarock and Boyz Noise are all brilliant at bringing rock attitude, edge and humor to electronic music." **Sten Ove Toft, artist (Norway)**



"Stockhausen—he's been quite critical of a lot of the music that has emerged from his electronic performances, but seeing some of the acts here shows how his ideas have developed." **David Toop, author (UK)**



"Biosphere performing in Stavanger cathedral was incredible. The setting really suited that Arctic feeling which no other musician has captured so consistently." **Xploding Plastix, artists (Norway)**



"Jamie Lidell had everyone in the palm of his hand...and there's no place I'd rather be." **Rachel Harding, festival-goer (UK)**



KUDU
L.E.S. MAINSTAYS USHER IN
THE ERA OF TROPICAL GOTH.
WORDS: JESSE SERWER PHOTO: AR STUDIO

Kudu's Sylvia Gordon and Deantoni "D" Parks

It's a gift and a curse. Break boundaries, navigate diverse styles creatively, and no one knows what to call you. Such has been the plight of Kudu, the NYC-based trio centered around drummer Deantoni "D" Parks and vocalist Sylvia Gordon (but also including keyboardist Nick Kasper). They've drawn everyone from John Cale to Beans to their homebase at Nublu, the remotely located East Village eclectic music outpost where they've held a long-running Tuesday night residency. While those who've caught Kudu's hypnotic sets from Baltimore to Turkey are often instantly hooked, no one seems able to describe them to their friends.

"They are usually such long explanations," groans Gordon, a diva-ish stunner who combines the Texan twang of Erykah Badu, the quirky-cool style of Siouxsie Sioux and the scale command of a cocktail lounge jazz singer (on record she also splits sequencing/keyboard duties with Parks). "Somebody [actually *Rip It Up and Start Again* author Simon Reynolds, on his blog] called us 'tropical goth.' I like the image that puts into my head: goth people on the beach."

"Urban new wave" is another appropriate, if somewhat awkward, description that's been thrown around. With a

sound centered around buzzing, Gary Numan-like synths—but informed by hip-hop, funk, jazz and drum & bass—Kudu could be to New York's robotic white New Wave revival what Prince and his disciples were to the icy British sounds of two decades ago.

Everything comes together on the group's first single, "Bar Star," on the newly launched Nublu label, which, without the aid of a mixer or producer, sounds remarkably dancefloor-ready for a band that sort of rocks live. Centered around a pulsing, housey throb, Gordon breaks it down with Salt-N-Pepa-informed directions to "Ahh...push it" and lets out a banshee-like wail reminiscent of Vanity's "Nasty Girl" climax before an apocalyptic synth rumble washes the song out.

Holding Kudu down is the remarkably restrained D, a former child protégé (and, like Gordon, a Berklee School of Music grad) who, at the age of six, appeared on *Star Search*; as a child, he was also a member of a touring funk band (until his parents caught the 30-something members taking drugs). The Georgia native—who's backed Cale and Me'shell N'dege Ocello, among others—might be the "drummer in New York most frequently asked by musicians and bands to join them."

"Fusion types are always like 'You're such an amazing drummer, you've got to realize your skills—we'll rule the world with our music!'" Gordon says of her partner. Parks adds, "They don't really get that this is about songs."

Kudu's *Death of the Party* is out now on Nublu Records.
www.kudu2u.com, www.nublu.net

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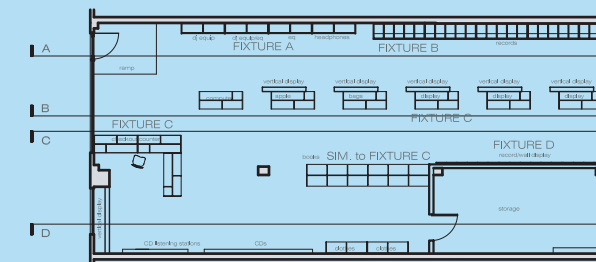
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ESSENTIALS: WHY?

Anticon's psychedelic bandleader, Yoni Wolf, talks about a few of his favorite things.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTO: JESSICA MILLER

An Empty Stomach I prefer to record on an empty stomach. If I eat something, I will just sit around and never get anything done. But after I'm finished I like to go to some hotshot Vietnamese place and get the greasiest thing. And you gotta have dessert, vegan cookies or something.

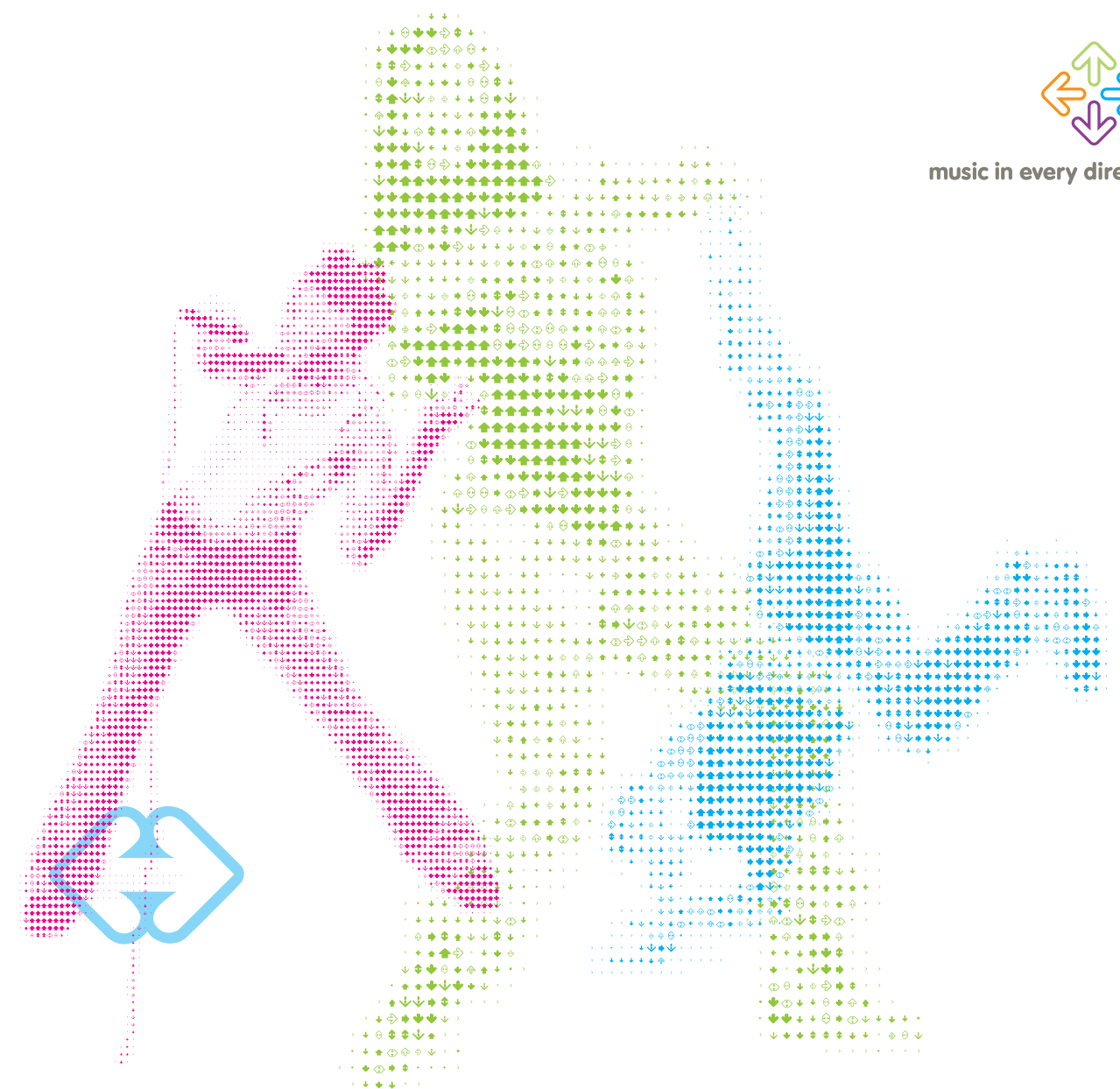
Old Beck Stuff "I'm not into that "two turntables and a microphone" stuff. I'm talking about *One Foot in the Grave*. That's the shit. That's his first record that I know of, it came out on K Records. It's got Calvin Johnson singing on it and it's really raw—just acoustic guitar and floor tom and vocals.

Roland VS880 I used this digital 8-track lot on *Elephant Eyelash*. I would put the track I was working on onto it, then take it to my brother's house to record drum sounds and bring it back home and put that stuff on my computer. The next record I'm not doing on computers—I'm thinking of getting a big tape machine.

A Backpack I always carry this old orange-and-tan backpack I got at a garage sale. It's only got two pockets and inside are shitloads of papers and scraps—"to do" lists, customs papers. I'm the guy at the airport who has to rifle through 50 million pages to find what they're looking for.

Red Hooded Sweatshirt I only wear stuff that's used or that somebody gives to me. It's good to just have one sweatshirt—I don't have room to be carrying all types of shit. I just left my favorite red hooded sweatshirt in LA. It was a pullover, but I'd like a zip up if anybody has one. I've been looking for one for 12 years.

Why's *Elephant Eyelash* is out now on Anticon. www.anticon.com



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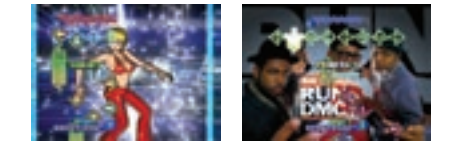
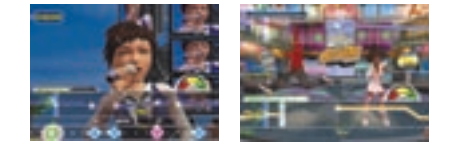
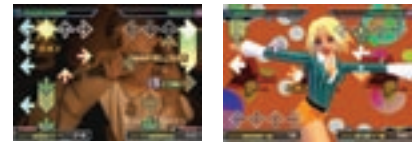


OH SNAP!

The Quiet Life presents postcards from the edge.

There is nothing "extreme" about the new, pocket-sized photography book *The Quiet Life Camera Club: Volume One* (softcover; The Quiet Life, \$20). The 92 pages of snaps herein—rows of Technicolored cotton candy, psychedelic wheatfields and snowy, abandoned city streets—are so far removed from the wild abandon depicted by hipster rogues like Richardson and McGinley they almost seem, well, Mormon. A closer inspection reveals these photographers—a mix of established names and people who simply submitted to the Camera Club website—have an eye for quiet beauty and an attention for the tiny details that make life so interesting. After flipping from Amy Nieto's lonely lighthouse to Jonathan Kennedy's single, soaring bird to Eric Anthony's green-tinged portrait of a proud Evel Knievel pinball machine, you'll feel like you've taken a relaxing roadtrip...even if you've never left your desk. *Tyra Bangs*

www.thequietlife.com

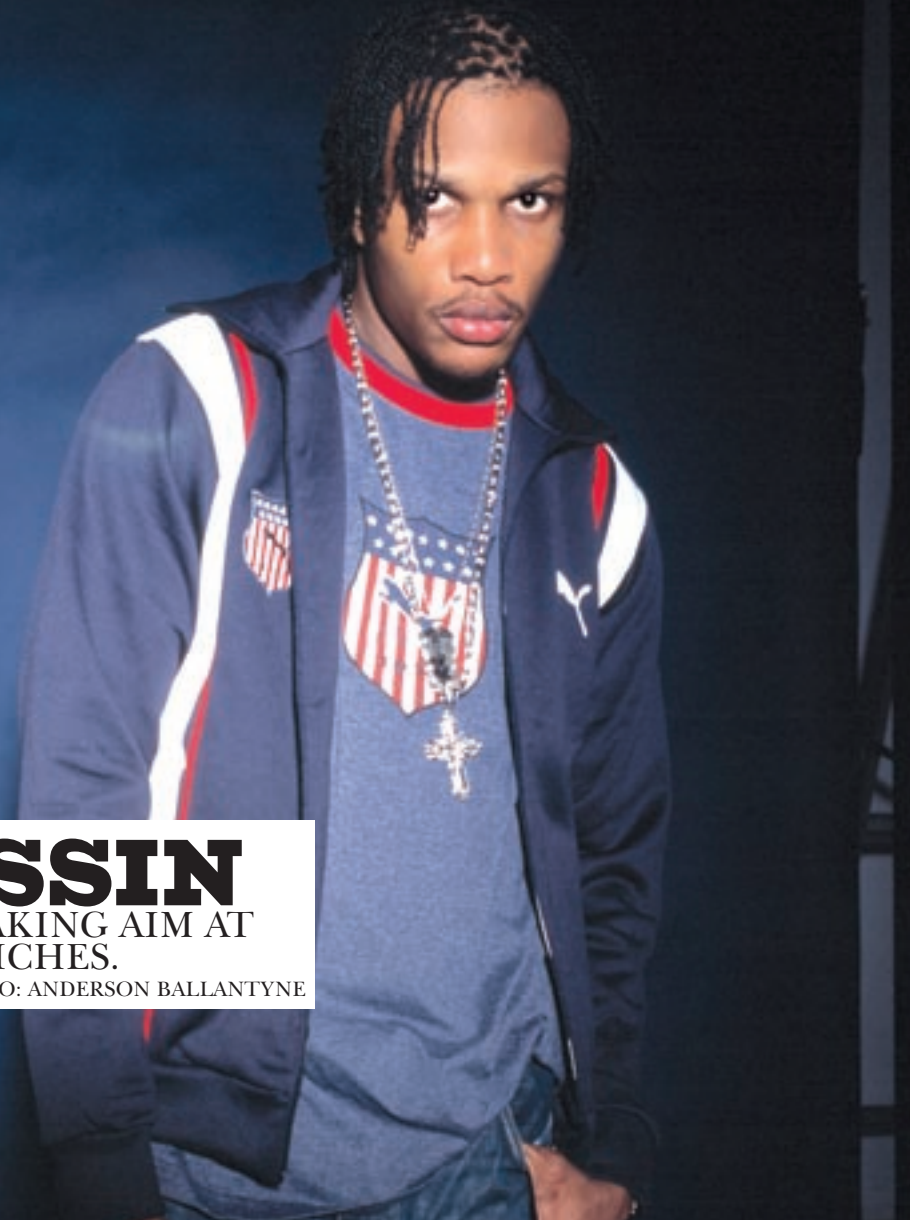


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ASSASSIN

A DJ HITMAN TAKING AIM AT DANCEHALL CLICHES.

WORDS: JAMES MAYO PHOTO: ANDERSON BALLANTYNE

Jeffrey "Assassin" Campbell is a leader of a new generation of Jamaican dancehall artists who are hoping to elevate the genre by providing music with more lyrical depth.

"I try to maintain a certain level of integrity in the material," says Campbell from his home in Jamaica. "It is not all about the frivolous dancehall. We try to add substance to the mix rather than just all hype and entertainment." As in the States—where thug posturing in hip-hop has become a tired cliché—Jamaican dancehall's obsession with guns, violence and homophobia has threatened to stunt its growth.

Determined to flip this script, the 22-year-old deejay brings a conscious vision to his recent full-length debut, *Infiltration*, the first of a multi-record deal he signed with VP and Penthouse Records. Tracks like "Free at Last" echo themes found in classics like Peter Tosh's "400 Years"; using Martin Luther King's famous phrase as a jumping-off point, Campbell says his song gives voice "to the journey of black people."

Campbell's own path hasn't been easy. Growing up in Papine, Kintyre, a town east of Kingston, he believed that getting an education was the key to escaping the gang life that impacted many in his community. After attending Kingston's

Camperdown High School, he planned to study journalism at the University of West Indies. While at Camperdown, he developed the talent that would earn him his nickname. "The name came from being involved in lyrical battles in the lunchroom," he explains.

The journey that would take Campbell beyond the lunchroom began in school, when he gave a song to his friend Briggie, whose uncle happened to be Spragga Benz. Spragga used Campbell's lyrics for his hit "Big Up All Di Shotta Dem."

Encouraged by his success as a ghostwriter, Campbell expanded what he calls his "recognizance mission" after graduating in 2000. He hooked up with esteemed producer Donovan Germain of Penthouse Records and charted the 2002 single "Ruffest and Tuffest." Having experienced regional recognition, Campbell is now ready to extend his operation worldwide.

Although he still plans to attend university, his focus with the release of *Infiltration* is to get his voice heard, and to help dancehall evolve. "On this debut album, we'll show we have the potential to move forward from this stage where we are at now," he declares.

Infiltration is out now. www.vprecs.com

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Global Communication's Mark Pritchard and Tom Middleton

FIVE STAR: TOM MIDDLETON

Global Communication's mood manipulator picks his must-have ambient classics.

WORDS: DAVID HEMINGWAY PHOTO: CHRIS DAVISON

1. Brian Eno *Eno Box 1: Instrumentals* (Virgin)

I've listened to the third disc in this beautifully presented set more than any other in my entire collection. It's not only my personal fave in the bedroom, but also good for meditation, delicious sedation and turning your house into a temple of tranquility. Every household in the world should have this CD. I believe this music to have powerful healing qualities and a resonant energy that rebalances everything that it touches.

2. Vangelis "Creation Du Monde" from *L'Apocalypse Des Animaux* (Polydor)

I've been a huge fan of Mr. Papanthassiou's output over the years, but I'd select this 10-minute piece from the 1973 soundtrack to *L'Apocalypse Des Animaux* as a highlight for me. It may even have been recorded around the time I was born. You feel as if you're there witnessing the birth of the planet, waiting for emergent new lifeforms. Simply exquisite.

3. Tomita *Snowflakes Are Dancing* (RCA)

Recorded in 1974 by the peerless master of atmospheric and ethereal electronic music. Classical pieces by Debussy reworked using analog synthesizers that still sound utterly unique to this day. I was spellbound when I first heard this LP, sat in the sweet spot between a pair of Tannoy speakers, mesmerized and entranced by the swirling sounds, drama and dynamics, and the delicacy of Debussy's melodies.

4. LA Synthesis "Zyllvakrynn" from *Matrix Surfer* (Shield Records)

An extraordinary piece of music—the emotional intensity is incredible. It's akin to Black Dog/Plaid/Balil but very reminiscent of Sylvian and Sakamoto; it could be Talk Talk's Mark Hollis playing the piano. It's all about the mood, the tempo, the harmonic changes. I'd want this played at my funeral along with Sebastien Tellier's "La Ritournelle," which has a similarly potent emotional content.

5. Amba "Moonbathing" (appears on Middleton's *Sound of the Cosmos* mix CD on Hooj Choons)

I seek to create music that has a spiritual quality to it; Amba is just for me, for those times I need to escape from this fast world. I wrote "Moonbathing" at the time of a strange lunar phenomenon that occurred over New Year's Eve, Cornwall, 1998. There was a huge white halo at least 10 times the diameter of the moon that I still can't find any information about. I translated this into a sound that sweeps 360 degrees around your head. It's a deeply personal piece and my cure for homesickness.

Global Communication's *76:14 (Expanded Edition)* is out now on Sanctuary Records. For ambient picks from Global Communication's Mark Pritchard, visit www.xlr8r.com.



NORTHERN SOUL

Nortec's new book gets to the heart of Tijuana's techno culture.

Growing up in California, Tijuana was the place where people sold Chiclets and machetes painted with Lorena Bobbitt's name on every corner. It was where 18-year-old college kids went to get legally wasted on tequila shots and buy pharmaceuticals. It was also the frontier, the border along which tensions between First World and Third World were constantly playing out. Tijuana is still all these things, but it's also so much more, as electronic music/art collective Nortec Collective have continuously shown the world since forming in 1999. Nortec's latest venture is a hefty book called *Paso Del Nortec (This is Tijuana)* (softcover; Oceano de Mexico, \$36.75). Inside the lime-green cover lies an introduction to

everything you need to know about Tijuana and Nortec Collective, including introductions to all their artists (like Fussible, Bostich and Panoptica), tons of photos and graphic design from crew members like Torolab and Acamonchi, a history of electronic music in Northern Mexico and a glossary of terms and quotes that tie the whole thing together. It's an exhausting fairground ride of visuals and text (in both English and Spanish), one that insures Nortec's legacy will outlast even the borders that inform their music. *Tyra Bangs*

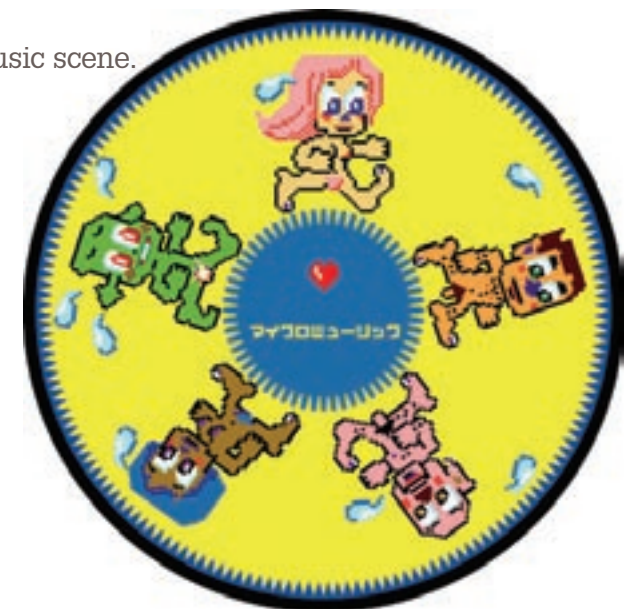
www.norteccollective.com, www.nacionalrecords.com

MICRO GETS MACRO

Micromusic.net is home to the rapidly expanding 8-bit music scene.

Considering that most people's exposure to electronic music first comes through videogames, it's no surprise that micromusic.net, the world's most active chip and 8-bit music portal, just celebrated its sixth anniversary. Hackers and modders, gamers and musicians meet to chat, post tunes and events and trade bits of software in this vibrant community. Numbering 13,400 members, the site has regional microHQs in LA, NYC, London, Newcastle, Stockholm, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, Basel, Zurich, Melbourne, Enschede and Tokyo which throw events, run workshops and broadcast radio shows. The benevolent eyes of carl, wanga, ne?mo, and lektrogirl oversee the eye-poppingly colorful interface, which has close to 500 tracks available in its up/download section. lektrogirl stresses the whole site is a "mega group effort," built on the open-source idea that exchange and giving are profitable for all. Coding suggestions get written back into the site and many users go further by creating tools to help them make the music, converting C64s into 303s and coding trackers for Gameboys. (Microbuilder.com is available for enthusiasts wanting to start their own community.) Those stuck in slow-time can order the *Music for Joggers* CD, which contains tracks from site members as well as wanga-designed micro-k K-Swiss shoes. *Matt Earp*

www.micromusic.net





NEGO MOÇAMBIQUE

SWEATING IT OUT WITH BRASÍLIA'S DANCEFLOOR POWERHOUSE.

WORDS: BRUNO NATAL PHOTO: CAROL QUINTANILHA

With only one self-titled record to his name (on the Segundo Mundo label), inventive Brazilian producer Negó Moçambique (the alias of 32-year-old Marcelo Martins) has already played at Barcelona's Sonar festival and Montreal's MUTEK, and in Paris and London. But he didn't have to travel that far to catch DJ Hell's attention. The head of Gigolo Records saw Moçambique live in Rio last February, and was blown away.

"He sounds like a mixture between Kraftwerk and Green Velvet with a Brazilian touch," Hell told local newspaper *O Globo*. "He uses very few things on stage, but makes an incredible sound and has tremendous presence. Everything he played in two hours was excellent. He can be big, if he wants to."

"I noticed this guy, clearly a foreigner, paying attention," says Moçambique, when asked about the gig. "Suddenly, my mixer malfunctioned and this person not only showed me what was going on, but fixed it. I thought, 'What a nice gringo!' Turns out it was DJ Hell. We exchanged emails and we have been talking about doing something for his label. It's funny because he liked exactly the songs I didn't think were the best ones."

A music student, Moçambique never considered becoming a DJ. Living in the country's capitol, Brasília, he wanted to create his own sound. "Because Brasília is far from the so-called Rio/São Paulo cultural axis, things

were more amateur and I had more liberty to experiment," he explains. "DJs have gotten really specific [these days]. This segmentation has transformed styles into ghettos."

Using only hardware, Moçambique started producing with a Boss DR-5 drum machine and an Emu Morpheus synthesizer. These days, his live PAs are achieved with an MPC 1000 sampler, a Virus C synthesizer and a Fatman valve compressor, all plugged into an eight-channel board. The thing that hasn't changed is his sound, which evades genre classifications even as it references black music, *baile funk*, Afrobeat, electro, house and breakbeat. In his propulsive, minimal tracks, Moçambique samples everything from Gilberto Gil to Barrington Levy and Prince, but never in an obvious way.

"I say I make funk with a Brazilian accent, but there's also other influences," Moçambique offers. "When I'm making music I try to balance something for every mood, stuff that everyone can dance to." Instead of trying to emulate whatever is the newest trend abroad, he fuses his own references and makes his own parameters. "Music is made of what you live," he declares. "You have a daughter, you're crazy for your wife, the day is beautiful, you're feeling good...I make music about that."

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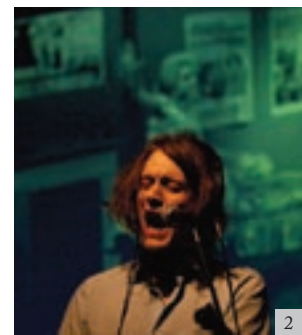


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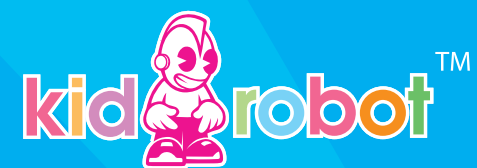
SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world

Jack Dangers, Robin Guthrie, Richie Hawtin, Thurston Moore, Tadd Mullinix, DJ Olive, Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Mark Van Hoen headline *Sacred and Profane: A Collection of Sonic Art*, an on-going series of sound events October 1 through January 1, 2006 at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center (CAC). The artists will use sound alone as their medium, along with simple listening stations set up throughout the space. www.contemporaryartscenter.org IdN DesignEdge Conference & Expo 05 takes place in Singapore November 10-12, hosted by the DesignSingapore Council. Some of the biggest names in contemporary design, including **DELTA** (The Netherlands), **Kostas Seremetis** (USA), **Maharishi** (UK), **Suk & Koch Media** (USA), **Ben Drury** from U.N.K.L.E. (UK), **Rostarr** and others will fill seven specialist pavilions and explore the latest developments in animation, art, fashion, interactive, music and print design work. www.idnworld.com England's **The Leaf Label** celebrated its 10th year with a series of shows in London in late October; talent included **Caribou, Murcof, Colleen, Efterklang** and **Hanne Hukkelberg**. The label, started in 1995 with a 12" from Boymerang, now counts 100+ releases exploring the place where electronica, jazz, classical, rock, folk and pop music mesh. www.theleaflabel.com "This isn't a film about history—it's about right now," says filmmaker Amy Grill about her documentary on techno and contemporary electronic dance music. The doc is set to feature interviews with **Michael Mayer, Superpitcher, Richie Hawtin, Wolfgang and Reinhard Voigt** (co-owners of Kompakt with Michael Mayer), **Wighnomy Brothers, Akufen** and **Deadbeat**. See clips at www.amygrill.com. Tired of AllHipHop.com alerts? **Ballerstatus.com** has launched its own daily hip-hop newswire where you can catch up with Kanye comments, Suge

shootings and Common call-outs, plus the main site has reviews, clips, links and editorials that cut through all the rap b.s. www.ballerstatus.net Broken techno scion **Domu's** new album, *Return of the Rogue*, is out now on Italy's Archive Recordings. Atmospheric D&B producer **Deep Blue** (Sean O'Keefe, half of 2 Bad Mice) has released his anticipated solo debut LP, *Metropolitan Chic*, on his label Scale. www.scalerecords.com. Jamaican reggae singjay **Sizzla** brings his strict Bobo rasta culture to the land of bling, signing a multi-album deal with Damon Dash's DDMG. **Neo** is a digital music store/portal that utilizes multiple payment modes, supports multiple currencies and offers free promotional tools and podcasting capabilities for producers, artists and labels seeking sales or more exposure. *Viva la revolution* at www.neomusicstore.com. Utah law enforcement and a **SWAT team** raided a legally permitted rave August 20 in Spanish Fork, an area of the desert outside of Salt Lake City. Dressed in riot gear and military fatigues, officers used batons on unarmed party-goers and forced them to disperse at gun-point. See video clips at homepage.mac.com/apexgrin/FileSharing2.html. Look for hot fall releases from the likes of **Blockhead** (Ninja Tune), **Fat Lip** (Delicious Vinyl), **Yesterday's New Quintet** (Stones Throw), **Doujah Raze**, **Sadat X** (Female Fun) and **Supastition** (Soul Spazm) on the record shelves soon. The first-ever compilation of videos from **Tino Corp.** features classic and brand new, never before released clips from Tino, Meat Beat Manifesto, DJ Shadow, DHS, TV Sherriff and more. Mixed entirely in 5.1 surround sound, loaded with features and over 70 minutes of material; it's in stores now and available from the Tino website. www.tinocorp.com. Go to www.shopdshadow.com to pick up the *Public Works* box set music/clothing collaboration from **DJ Shadow** and **Shepard Fairey** (OBEY). Hurry! It's limited to 450 copies. The "Boss Hogg on candy" **Slim Thug's** unreleased track "Get It Started" is featured in EA Sports' *Madden NFL 2006* football videogame.

1. Blockhead; 2. Efterklang;
3. Sizzla; 4. Thurston Moore;
5. Doujah Raze; 6. Slim Thug;
7. Hanne Hukkelberg



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MUSIC TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL

2005

HOT CARL

Talking dirty with Detroit legend Carl Craig.
WORDS: PETER NICHOLSON PHOTOS: RIVA SAYEGH
SHOT ON LOCATION AT CENTAUR (DETROIT, MI)
LOGO ILLUSTRATION: DAVID CLARK

"It's the idea that I want to fuck you."



And God says to Bill Gates, 'Bill, that's just a screensaver!' Hahahahaha!" So ends an hour-long conversation with Carl Craig—Detroit techno definer, globe-trotting DJ and, evidently, lover of Internet jokes. Craig is obviously not new to the interview game, but he's far from jaded. He's ready to talk about his new mix for Fabric, what keeps him going after 15 years of innovation...and even "sonic masturbation."

Like his complex, ever-evolving sound, Carl Craig radiates energy. He's never been short of ideas, and though he is most often tagged with the techno moniker, Craig's ideas of techno have blossomed into compositions which encompass jazz (*The Detroit Experiment* and *Innerzone Orchestra*), prototype drum & bass ("Bug in the Bassbin") and organic mixes of ambient and breakbeat ("At Les") alongside club anthems like Paperclip People's "Throw." His work is astoundingly diverse—an eclecticism that has made fans of musicians like Marcus Belgrave and Francisco Mora as well as filled dancefloors.

Craig knew from an early age what he wanted to do when he grew up. "It hit me a few years ago," he recalls over the phone from his home in Detroit, where he's just tucked his two children in for the night. "I remember I was riding in the car, sixth grade or something like that, and I said to my mother, 'You know, I really want to be a DJ like [Electrifyin'] Mojo.' And it just hit me one day like 'Wham! Fuck, I *am* a DJ!'

"It's crazy!" he says with bemused glee.

CLASS CLOWN

Craig's rise as a producer definitely was crazy. At 20 he found himself in London with one of the acknowledged fathers of techno, Derrick May, riding a wave of European adulation. May's role as Craig's mentor is well-documented, but it is a mark of the latter's own confident artistic vision that—despite being taken under the wing of such a larger than life figure, touring with him, and even reworking a canonical song like "Strings of Life"—Craig stuck to his own guns and formed his own voice. "One of the things that [Derrick] told me when I was giving him demos was that some of it was good but others were shit," Craig recalls. "So that gave me the desire to prove him wrong, but also the understanding that not everything was good."

There is a restlessness to Craig's work—a refusal to be pigeonholed no matter how loud the praise, but also a constant searching. The man himself is quiet at times, slow

to answer and careful to choose his words, but then he'll fly off on a tangent, berating "those damn Red states" or teasing me good-naturedly about San Francisco and "back door entries." Visit the website of Planet-E, the label he founded in 1995—which has released seminal Craig works like *More Songs About Food and Revolutionary Art*, as well as introduced artists like Reclouse—and you're greeted by a grainy, maniacal close-up video of Craig's grinning mug, telling you that "If you want a bit of the old in-out, stay away from sites that Pete Townsend has visited."

"It's always been a major part of my life, cracking jokes and sex and all that stuff," admits Craig. "I think with my family, I was more the crazy cousin or the funny little brother that was always trying to tell jokes to my sister's friends or my brother's girlfriends in order to get the attention that way. I think that a lot of it came into the music because I was doing that more than anything else. I was sitting there, whether it was acting the fool or trying to entertain myself, whatever the situation, sonic masturbation... it just all [got wrapped up together]. Boy, do I miss those days," Craig snickers with an exaggerated (or is it?) nostalgic tone.

STAYING WARM

Craig is a joker, yet he's a serious artist—and he's ready to party. He's just finished a mix for Fabric, and what's the first track? Maybe a teaser from his new artist album due next year? Or a banging number from a favorite producer like DJ Yoav B? Those cuts *are* in the new mix, which he worked up using Native Instruments Traktor, but Craig chooses to kick things off with... The Ying Yang Twins?! "I really wanted to use ["Wait"] because it kinda sets a strange mood," says Craig. "It's the idea that I want to fuck you. I think it's quite exciting to me to integrate that, but [it's also exciting] on another level. There's so many influences with what's happening with crunk and with Missy [Elliott] using the Cybotron sample in ["Lose Control"]; [There's always been a] crossover between Detroit techno and hip-hop



"I'm still trying to get that sound right!"

Instead, Craig has continually trawled the limits of techno, of electronic composition, of music in general. His styles are as numerous as his names: Psyche, 69, Paperclip People, Designer Music, BFC, Tres Demented. His remixes reflect an omnivorous hunger for experimentation, drawn on a grand scale: both his 1994 rework of Tori Amos' "God" and last year's treatment of Beanfield's "Tides" clock in at almost 10 minutes of glorious, grand ambition. Craig introduces a theme, often deceptively simple, and then goes to work, shaping the feel, shifting the texture, and building the song into an elegant, inexorable monolith of sound.

Craig continues to expand his focus, with a list of upcoming projects that would be almost absurd in their scope if he wasn't at the helm. A *Kings of Techno* compilation with Laurent Garnier for BBE, *Demon Days* (an ongoing series of parties in Chicago and New York that will also feature visual art by Amsterdam's Parra) and a full-length artist album (about which he is coyly vague) are all due within the next year. "I'm happy with what I've been doing because it's kinda been like a whirlwind—even though it's not a whirlwind like Dirk Diggler or nothing!" laughs Craig. But when asked if his life has its own momentum, if the constant stream of requests for remixes and collaborations and appearances is what keeps him going, he demurs, and turns instead to the music itself. "There is a weird perfectionism that I have. Every time I get on a plane I think, 'Oh shit! I'm still trying to get that sound right! I hope nothing happens...'"

Carl Craig's DJ mix for Fabric will be out on December 6. *Kings of Techno*, also featuring Laurent Garnier, will be out in March 2006 on BBE. Carl's new artist album will be out Spring/Summer 2006 on Planet E Communications. www.planet-e.net

because [they're both] party music."

In discussing Craig, an artist who has a well-deserved reputation for being intelligent and articulate, it's easy to forget that he makes some amazing party music, and is one of the few legendary DJ/producers who actually delivers, with a guaranteed ability to rock the dancefloor. Like his compositions, Craig's DJ sets blend a hard-hitting, sometimes overwhelming embrace of technology and a worship of the 808 heartbeat with frank and open emotion. He doesn't always find that this human connection comes easily. "It kinda goes between striving for it and it just happening," he muses. "I've always dealt with my music in an improvisational way and I think the way that I mix in the club is how I mix in the studio. I'm able to put enough of myself into it to where it feels more human than just being a cold set of just track after track after track. And also I try to pick a lot of tracks that have a bit more of the human feel to [them]. It's just what

comes naturally, even though I'm not playing all batucada tracks," Craig chuckles.

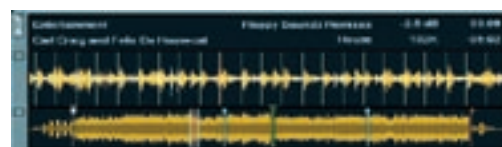
NO REST FOR THE WICKED

One of the highlights of Craig's sets is always Paperclip People's "Throw," a 1994 track whose relentless, rolling bass and hissing hi-hats draw an immediate and massive response. After the huge success when that track was initially released, did Craig want to make more like it? "I think I come across those thoughts more now because I'm on the road DJing and I know that certain tracks work or whatever," says Craig. "[After "Throw"] my attorney was telling me, 'You need to follow that record up! You need to do a new Paperclip People!' And I'm like, 'Nah, I want to do something else.' That was always my ideal, and I think that's what helped things not get out of control. Yeah, I could have sat there and tried to make these records over and over again and they could have been all successful or I could have just completely fallen flat on my face."

CARL CRAIG ON NATIVE INSTRUMENTS TRAKTOR DJ STUDIO

"I like [Traktor] because it can be very simple but it can be a bit difficult as well. For instance, doing the beatmaps and stuff—it's supposed to be easy but I haven't figured out how to do it yet. I really like the interface of Traktor and I thought it was really interesting to [do the mix with it]. Whenever I listen back to how I DJ with turntables and stuff it's not [as tight as I feel] a mix should be. [The mix should] sound like a finished record—that's what I tried to go for this time. After

[Fabric] asked me to do it, [I thought about] how I was going to deal with it. I could have used Final Scratch, I could have used vinyl, I could have used CDs, but I thought Traktor would be a lot more interesting and quicker way of doing what I was trying to do. The new version is really tight [and it's more] straightforward compared to [Ableton] Live. I don't know if [Traktor] will be the end-all thing to use, but it's a damn good piece of software."



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SPELL BOUND

Despite label troubles and bad juju, Ladytron's magic is stronger than ever.

WORDS: MARK PYTLIK PHOTO: DERRICK SANTINI

Of all the early praise directed at Ladytron for their new record, *Witching Hour*, the response that resonated most came in the form of tough love from a longtime friend. Upon hearing the album for the first time, Steve Pross, formerly the manager of the quartet's now-defunct label Emperor Norton, took founder Daniel Hunt aside and said, "You are now the band you were pretending to be five years ago." Others might have interpreted this as a backhanded compliment, but Hunt knew exactly what he was trying to say. "I completely understood it," he says on the line from his Liverpool flat. "I don't think he meant to discredit what we were doing before—but I don't feel like we're aspiring to be something anymore."

BEWITCHED

Stood beside 2001's debut *604* and 2002's *Light & Magic*, *Witching Hour* is a skyscraper. Not only is its production more agitated and alive, but its songs are sleeker, more aerodynamic and better crafted. Rounded out by multi-instrumentalist Reuben Wu and vocalists Mira

Ladytron: Daniel Hunt, Mira Aroyo, Helena Marnie and Reuben Wu

“It had become something mean and screechy and dynamic.”

—Daniel Hunt

Aroyo and Helena Marnie, all of whom contribute music by committee, there's a darker, more menacing bent to Ladytron circa 2005; cutesy tick-tock electro about movie theaters and cracked LCDs has given way to hurricane songs about destruction and screams bleeding through the walls.

Ladytron's showing increased confidence in its ability, which Hunt says was nourished by spending the majority of 2003 on the road. “We hadn't really toured properly before we recorded *Light & Magic*,” he says. “When we finished, we'd become such a monster live that it was just night and day from before—it had become something mean and screechy and dynamic. We'd learnt so much and there was so much we wanted to do. We could've toured for another six months at least, but we wanted to crack on with the record.”

MORE MONEY, MORE PROBLEMS

Starting the record would be a cakewalk; seeing it through would be another thing entirely. After concluding *Light & Magic's* traveling roadshow with a homecoming gig in Liverpool in September 2003 (their support: a little-known Scottish band called Franz Ferdinand), Ladytron immediately commenced work on demos for *Witching Hour*. New material flowed readily; within a few months, they'd mapped out the entire record. But by the time they were ready to start recording in April, their ill-fated UK label Telstar had gone into administration. “They put us in the studio but didn't tell us that this was going to happen. They must have known, so it was kind of an odd situation,” Hunt laughs. “We were like ‘What do we do? Do we carry on recording?’ So we just went ahead. They paid for at least part of it, but we had the fall-back position of Emperor Norton in the States, so we were like ‘Well, fuck it. It doesn't matter.’”

Famous last words. As the summer wore on, it became clear that Emperor Norton was also on the verge of running aground. Island UK had stepped up in Telstar's absence, so there was never a point where the band was homeless, but that summer was a tumultuous one. Despite being all but mixed by June 2004, *Witching Hour* was still light years away from being released; although Hunt knew that Ladytron was too well established not to land on its feet, he acknowledges that the band could have faced a huge momentum killer.

It's a testament to the durability of *Witching Hour* that all four bandmates remain excited

about the record nearly 15 months after making it. “This sounds narcissistic, but I can still listen to it on my iPod and enjoy it,” he says. “I still hear little things I hadn't heard before.” With the benefit of hindsight, Hunt also acknowledges that the label antics and the resulting layoff might be a good thing in the long run. For starters, it means they're on solid ground in both North America and Europe for the first time in a while. “Within a couple of weeks of signing to Telstar, we thought we might've made a mistake,” he recalls. “We were attracted to the label for all the wrong reasons—they had all these R&B acts on there and we just thought it was hugely amusing, looking completely incongruous on their roster. The main thing is we thought we'd be invited to all their parties and stuff, which probably wasn't the best basis for a healthy business relationship.”

BLADE RUNNERS

With any luck, the extended delay has washed away some of the lazy clichés that have plagued Ladytron since day one. Hunt is eager to finally outrun descriptors like ‘aloof’ (demeanor), ‘asymmetrical’ (haircuts), ‘electroclash’ (meaningless) and, perhaps most inexplicably, ‘Kraftwerk’ (sounds like). On the matter of that last bugaboo, Hunt simply sighs. “Our first single sounds like ‘The Model’, but we recorded it six years ago!” he says. “They are one of the greats, but if you told somebody that we sounded like Kraftwerk and they went and downloaded a bunch of our MP3s, they'd think you were full of shit. I mean, obviously we were named after a Roxy Music song, which would've been a more obvious place to look for influences, and *Low* by David Bowie is probably the closest thing to this record. I think we articulated that here better than ever.”

In keeping with past tradition, Reuben and Mira of Ladytron are doing a DJ tour this month, with a proper full-band tour to follow in the new year. Until then, Hunt's sharpening his knives in preparation for record number four. Given the layoff, it's hard to blame him for looking ahead. “[*Witching Hour*] is the closest thing to definitive that we've done, but I think the next one will be even more so,” he promises. “That's another way the layoff has been good—we've got quite a lot of stuff in reserve now.”

Ladytron's *Witching Hour* is out now on Rykodisc.
www.ladytron.com



From left: Korg MS10, Electro Harmonix, ARP 2600, Roland SH2

ANALOG GRAVEYARD

THE MACHINES THAT POPULATE LADYTRON'S SYNTHETIC PARADISE.

While heavily treated guitars continue to make a dent in Ladytron's sound, the band's studio is still ruled by keyboards. While Hunt claims the band owns at least 20 vintage pieces, he also admits to having lost count somewhere around 1998. Here he talks shop about Ladytron's studio gear, live setup and recording philosophies:

“Most of the bassy riffs are a **Roland SH2** or a **Korg MS20**. Reuben especially likes sticking his **Korg MS10** through **Electro Harmonix** boxes and fattening them up. For the poly stuff, we used Farfisa organs and Solina string machines—basically the same stuff we've used all along, but we probably treated it a bit rougher. We also used a load of the producer's toys as well—Reuben's got an **ARP 2600**, which you can sit around with for a full day trying to get something useful out of and fail, and the next

day you switch it on and it'll automatically make something genius.

“I've got this really shit, five-pound, sub-Casio keyboard that I got off this trader; the chords for ‘International Dateline’ were written on that. It's good to have that kind of gear. The shit toys can end up being quite inspirational.

“Our stage set-up is like Bell Laboratories. It's hugely complicated and it's a nightmare for anybody working with us. We've tried to rein in the amount of old analog gear we take out live with us just for logistics' sake—the stuff was breaking down and we had numerous keyboards just burst into flames. On the record itself, we've got free reign of course.

“Software synths are fine, especially for composition on a laptop. Once those sounds are down, we'll always look at alternatives. But sometimes you

just end up using [the originals], especially if they're something basic like a string synth, cause you're not going to get a different sound out of anything else unless you really want a load of AC hum or crackle. [Softsynths] are so much better now than they were when we did the last record. The main thing is that it's not the fact that you're using software or hardware, it's just making something sound different and not using presets.

“Our approach goes back to the whole Eno/Bowie *Low* thing—the treatments are as important as the synths. We like to confuse synths and guitars quite a lot—there are some things people hear they assume is a guitar that's a synth and vice versa. On the last album, there were guitars all over ‘Cease To Exist’ and a few of the other songs, but they were treated in a way that people didn't recognize them.”



DESPERATELY SEEKING SYNTH

Keith Fullerton Whitman travels the globe seeking the holy grail of analog gear.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD ILLUSTRATION: CHUCK ANDERSON/NOPATTERN

Master Keith Fullerton Whitman has spent eight hours straight playing the telephone switchboard-like Serge Modular Prototype synthesizer at Harvard, despite its cobwebs. His most favorite noise that it makes? “Without getting too technical, [it sounds like] a fleet of F-18s intercepting a UFO landing on Venus, or something like that,” he explains.

Our man sees many things in analog synthesizers—once the voice of electronic music. He views them as an endangered species with internal organs that decay over time. He also views myriad opportunities to use them “incorrectly” for music-making—by plugging wires into the wrong places, for instance. “I’m not thinking about it on a conscious level,” he says, touching the machines. “It’s something that defies logic. A lot of times with these instruments, logic will fly out the window after the first 10 minutes, and nothing behaves the way you think it’s going to behave.”

PLUG RESEARCH

Keith Fullerton Whitman is best known for being an avatar in the digital underground. Under the alias Hrvatski, he hacked, thwacked and kanacked the notorious Amen breakbeat, programmed his own synth patches to paint a 20-by-50-mile-long canvas with guitar tones and taught Harvard students how to concoct music with Max/MSP. And yet, Whitman finds a purity in analog gear.

“You’re dealing with just electricity turned into sound; [it’s] unlike software synthesis, where you’re

dealing with algorithms that emulate every aspect of electricity,” he says. “[This is] nothing more than plugging a cord into a wall that’s 110 volts and all of that voltage is used in so many creative ways to alter sound.”

Whitman argues that analog synths are *still* futuristic, as they were painstakingly built to produce sounds never heard before. And it’s not just his argument. Analog synths—popularized by the late Robert Moog—are now artifacts revered by nostalgists, price-gouging merchants and explorers like Whitman, who seek to unearth the sounds of raw electricity barely controlled by knobs, piano keys and wires.

MEDIUM: RARE

Whitman is more dedicated than most to exploring analog’s possibilities. When we called him up in September, he was touring Europe and had just discovered gold in the attic of Michel Waisvisz, director of Amsterdam’s STEIM electronic music center and inventor of the “crackle box” handheld synthesizer. “His eyes lit up like a schoolboy when I started talking about synths with him,” Whitman recalled. “He went to his attic and pulled out all this shit—he was





“He opened his closet and all these synthesizers fell out.”

so excited that a younger person was into this stuff. He opened his closet and all these synthesizers fell out.”

Whitman plans to include the sounds of his finds at Waisvisz's house, along with more Serge Modular excursions and pieces for the Buchla 100 (kept at Oakland, CA's Mills College), on his upcoming album. In fact, the entire record will be dedicated to analog machines he is discovering around the world. “I really want to find these dinosaurs and actually breathe some life into them,” he declares.

When asked about other rarities he's come across, Whitman mentions a steel-cased, Russian-built synth he met at Cologne's C/O Festival and the EMS Synthi 100 that was locked up at Melbourne's Percy-Grainger Museum. The latter was used to perform the *Dr. Who* theme, and is known for being the favorite toy of Meat Beat Manifesto's Jack Dangers.

“I pled with them to let me turn it on so I could play through it,” he recalls asking the museum staff. “They said, ‘You know, it's this really rare synth,’ and I said, ‘I know! You should turn it on and let kids play with it.’”

IN HOT PURSUIT

Whitman's analog hunt began when he and the duo Matmos lectured on electronic music at Harvard in 2002 and he first got his hands on the Serge. He later charmed himself into other college music labs to play with their oft-neglected analog gear. “If you know a college that has a

really cool piece of gear or a cool studio, chances are that they are not using it,” he explains. “Chances are that it's sitting in a dusty corner somewhere while students are learning Logic or Max/MSP on computers. If you contact these places as an outsider and say, ‘Wow, you have this great, covetable thing that a) is worth something and b) is useful for making music,’ they'll say, ‘Really? You want to play with that thing? Nobody has touched that thing in 20 years!’”

As for finding the gear on his own, Whitman is lucky enough to live in a Boston-area neighborhood full of ex-Harvard professors, who often get rid of their old analog gear at garage sales. He recommends readers check out email lists like Analogue Heaven and Synth DIY to learn about where to get the goods, and contacting synthesizer manufacturers in your area to see if they have a surplus.

ELECTRIC YOUTH

Whitman's future plans include more research on analog gear; he also hopes to build synths (with techie Jessica Rylan) that employ the same Texas Instruments computer chip used to create the explosions, hums and laser zaps found in late '70s/early '80s arcade games. “We're designing a synth that will make sounds like *Space Invaders*,” he declares.

He's also enjoying the grit and sweat of building synthesizer patches from scratch. One of his favorite tricks is sticking paper clips between a synth's modules to short out the circuits and

create alien sounds. “There is nothing like that with software,” he explains. “You can't get in the guts of something and really rearrange the actual electrical structure. Somehow, that's gratifying to me...getting shocked occasionally, that's not so gratifying.”

While analogs can look frighteningly complex to use, Whitman is quick to reassure that many of them aren't much more complicated than operating a home stereo. He recalls demonstrating the Serge and other analogs to Harvard students, who were initially baffled.

“I showed them the analog studio and they were totally confused (with) all these knobs,” he said. “It's foreign to have that much control over something, but you break it down like, ‘This is the wave and this is another wave, and this is your amplifier—it's just like your home stereo.’ [Then it's like] ‘I'm turning this knob and the sound is changing. Wow!’ There are no delays, no mouse, no digital values...it's just electricity running through some wires.”

Multiples is out now on Kranky. Beginning late fall, Hrvatski's next album, *Meubles*, will be released as one 7-inch single a month on various labels.

www.keithfullertonwhitman.com, www.kranky.net



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FLAVOR UNIT

Production tips and tricks from the hip-hop production vanguard.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTOS: JATI LINDSAY (KEY BROWN), JESSICA MILLER (ID & SLEEPER), NATURE SOUNDS (OMEGA ONE), BLAIN VANDEBERG (CYNE)

It's hard to interview seasoned hip-hop producers—they tend to act like making a club banger is as easy as turning on the sampler. So when we went searching for hip-hop production tips for our Music Technology issue, we decided to ask artists for whom the struggle was fresh in their mind. Here we introduce you to five young producers from around the US—all of whom have just released new albums—and deliver you their advice for making beats that don't suck.



CYNE (left to right): Akin, Enoch, Speck, Cyne

ENOCH & SPECK

Enoch and Speck comprise the sampler-savvy half of Cyne, a four-man Florida hip-hop outfit whose name is an acronym for "Cultivating Your New Experience." Their beats have a hazy late night/early morning sound, with wistful keys and muted horns underpinned by low, rumbling sub bass—in other words, a perfect mix of Enoch's soul influences and Speck's taste for psychedelic rock.

Location: Gainesville, Florida

Gear: An MPC2000, a Microchord synth to get basslines off of, ProTools for the mixdown and to record vocals.

Claim to fame: The beat for "Steady," off Cyne's *Time Being* album. "That was the track that got us introduced to Four Tet. He played it on BBC radio," says Speck.

Most unusual thing in their studios: A golf putting green and a talking Master P doll.

Working on: An EP to follow the new album and beats for other MCs from the Miami area.

What album made you want to produce hip-hop?

Wu-Tang's *Enter the 36 Chambers*, and then a few years later Co Flow's *Fun Crusher Plus*—that made me start saving up to buy turntables and a sampler. It just seemed so grimy, like these guys did it in their house, and at the same time it struck a chord in me—it was the first time I felt like I could make something like that. (Enoch)

What's the most innovative hip-hop track you've heard recently?

"Rock Cocaine Flow" from the last De La Soul record. Jake One produced it. There's a certain part near the chorus where he breaks everything down and messes with the tempo and the timing of it and De La Soul and MF Doom [adjust their rhymes] to fit perfectly. (Enoch)

What do you do when you're lacking inspiration?

I try not to listen to other hip-hop records because it's incredibly frustrating. I try to excite myself with some record that I've never explored before, maybe find a rhythm or a layered melody that I want to try to recreate or achieve. (Speck)

Production tips: There's a lot of people who buy records [for sampling] in pristine condition. Sometimes when we find a fucked up record we don't necessarily think that's a bad thing, because it gives the track more character and makes it sound more raw. (Enoch)

Keep track of your samples. Know where everything came from because somewhere along the line it might come back to bite you. (Speck)

Cyne's Evolution Fight is out now on City Centre Offices. www.cyne.net



"I'm a slave to the stack of records."
—Omega One



OMEGA ONE

The all-instrumental debut from the affable Omega, friend of Aesop Rock and Blockhead, mixes dirty funk and soul with more futuristic electronic sounds. Omega doesn't waste time on new gear, nor does he worry about having a more obscure loop than someone else. "To be able to create a real song that changes and keeps you engaged is what really interests me," he says.

Location: East Village, Manhattan

Gear: An ASR-10 sampler/keyboard and ProTools. "I don't want to spend the time learning a new program when I could use that time making more beats," he says.

Claim to fame: His work with Aesop Rock: "Skip Town" on *Float*, "Coma" on *Labor Days*.

Most unusual thing in his studio: Lots of floppy discs.

Working on: An album with MC LoDeck, which is almost finished.

What album made you want to produce hip-hop?

Enter the 36 Chambers by Wu-Tang Clan. The way they used the ASR-10, it sounded like things barely managed to stay together. I really like the way all the drums sound like they were taken right off a beat-up old 45. The samples don't always sound quantized perfectly and it doesn't matter. *Step in the Arena* by Gangstarr has got a similar quality.

What's the most innovative hip-hop track you've heard recently?

Mondi's "See Through." That hit me more than anything I've heard in months—it's electronic but it's grungy funk. Whether he looped it



"Try different gear to find what you're comfortable with."

-Sleeper



or not, I give him credit for bringing that sound to my ears. And Masta Killa's "Secret Rivals." It's a simple drum track with a couple of piano stabs.

What do you do when you're lacking inspiration?

The thing about sampling is that I find I'm a slave to the stack of records that I have sitting there, for better or for worse. Also, I go through floppy discs from old tracks that I was about to throw out and see if I can find something.

Production tips: So many people only sample in mono. Take advantage of the fact that the records you sample are in stereo. When things are panned, you can take one loop and you have so many different elements. If you take only the right side or the left side, it opens up something that would just be a loop into a number of samples. And layer a lot of drums—like a drum loop plus a number of different drum sounds.

Omega One's *The Lo-Fi Chronicles* is out now on Nature Sounds. www.nature-sounds.net

SLEEPER

Famed tattoo artist-cum-beatsmith Carlos Ransom (a.k.a. Sleeper) describes his music as "creepy...and nerdy." Mixing turntablism with sounds culled from his collection of homemade circuit-bent toys, he creates an eerie, crunchy, IDM-meets-hip-hop horror backdrop for stream-of-consciousness rap from partner-in-crime iD. Ransom also records solo as MadAwkward, owns the Ransom Notes label and has a throaty laugh.

Location: Lawrence, Kansas

Gear: A Dr. Sample, an MPC2000, turntables, an SP-12, a computer and lots of circuit-bent keyboards and toys that he makes himself.

Most unusual thing in his studio: A nice purple lamp from the '50s.

Working on: Another album with iD where every sample is taken from his circuit-bent gear.

What album made you want to produce hip-hop?

Probably Dr. Octagon, but I always liked Public Enemy's albums because they had that rock edge to them.

What's the most innovative hip-hop track you've heard recently?

"11th Ave. Freakout Pt. 2" on Odd Nosdam's *Burner* with Mike Patton and Why?. I've always loved Odd Nosdam and the drums are great. It wouldn't sound good with somebody rapping over it but it fits perfectly with the vocals it has.

What's the best thing going on in hip-hop right now?

Honestly, I don't listen to a whole lot of hip-hop. I'm really into the circuit-bending stuff and I'm really into doom metal and stoner rock right now.

How did you get into circuit bending?

I heard one of this guy Waterhead's CDs; he runs a website called www.bent-instruments.com. I started talking to him online and he gave me a couple tips; then I started finding stuff at flea markets and thrift stores. I get a keyboard and bend it and keep it if I really like it; otherwise I'll sample all the sounds and then sell it to a friend.

What do you do when you're lacking inspiration?

I'll just start little beats here and there. Also I usually turn around and focus on my artwork and after a while I'll get inspired to get back in the studio.

Production tips: You can take influence from people—start out like that if you have to and then work to find your own style. And try different gear to find what you're comfortable with. I started making beats on the first version of *MTV Music Generator* for Playstation, then I stepped up to Acid.

iD and Sleeper's *Displacement* is out now on Mush Records. www.dirtyloop.com, www.carlosransom.com

KEV BROWN

Brown doesn't so much reinvent the genre as he carries on a legacy started by Premier and Pete Rock: he makes soul-driven, jazzy boom-bap that heads will nod to. Having dropped beats for De La Soul and Jazzy Jeff, his new solo record is full of smoky, smooth loops rapped over by traditionalists like Oddissee, Grap Luva and Little Brother's Phonte.

Location: Landover, Maryland (near Washington DC)

Gear: MPC2000 XL and a Yamaha AW 4416. It's a mixing board with an actual recorder in it, plus a CD burner, automation and effects.

Claim to fame: *The Brown Album*, a remix of the Jay-Z joint.

Most unusual thing in his studio: A Rubik's Cube.

Working on: R&B tracks, shopping my beats and my group, Isaac Jones.

What album made you want to produce hip-hop?

Pete Rock's *Soul Survivor*. I was always a Pete Rock fan from his days with CL Smooth and all the remixes he's done. To me, this is what hip-hop is supposed to sound like.

What's the most innovative hip-hop track you've heard recently?

I like Kanye West's *The Late Registration* album. He got more musical with it but it's more simple at the same time.

What do you do when you're lacking inspiration?

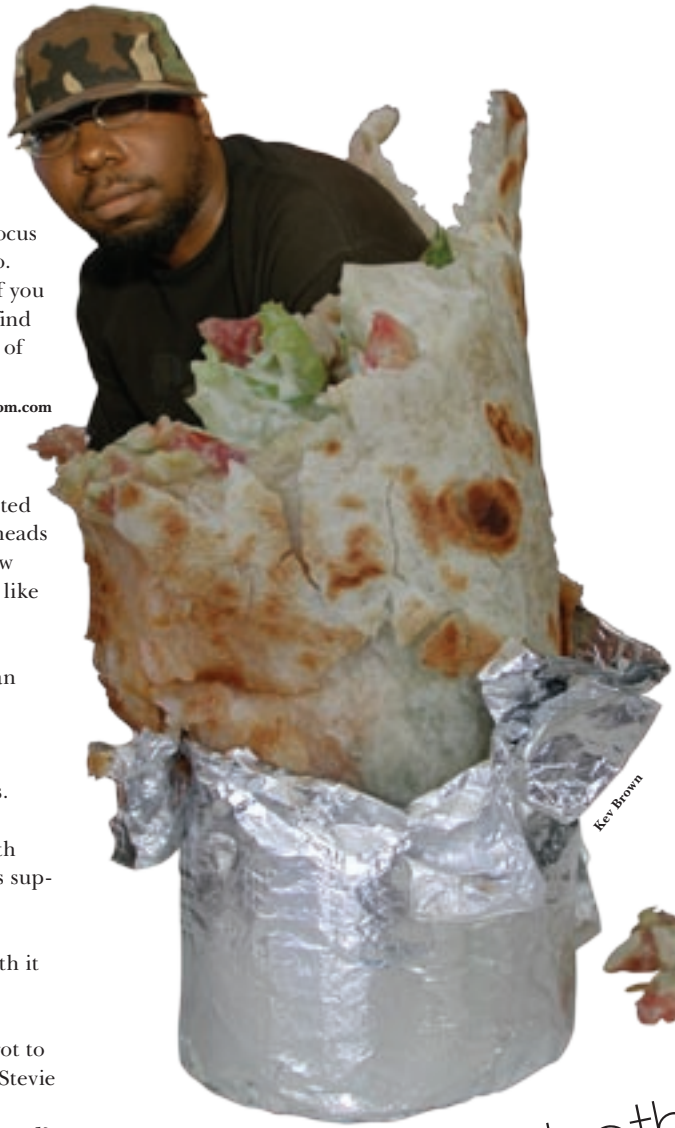
There's been times when I have wack beat-itis. If it's like that, you just got to not try to rush it and not bore yourself. Just listen to some old records—Stevie Wonder or Al Green.

What influence do you think upgrading equipment has had on your sound?

I used to have an Akai S20. That's like a poor man's MPC. Better equipment helps you express [your style] better. The MPC has a broader palette that you can use to edit your tracks, sample toms and filters and all of that. It gave me the opportunity to make more natural-sounding tracks.

Production tips: Don't steal other producers' drums. If you get a Gangstarr instrumental joint and it's got an open snare, don't take that joint. There's mad breakbeat records out there and drums you can lift. Ohio Players, The Meters... And make backups of your tracks. So when you do blow up and Beyoncé wants that track you won't be like, "Ohhhh, I lost that beat."

Kev Brown's *I Do What I Do* is out now on Up Above. www.kevbrownmusic.com, www.upabove.com



"Don't steal other producers' drums."

-Kev Brown

SMASH & GRAB

Screwed and chopped pop from Jackson and his Computer Band.

WORDS: COLIN J. NAGY ILLUSTRATION: DREW HEFFROM (WWW.OAKANDELM.COM)

Peer pressure motivates plenty of ill-advised teenage actions. Still, producing gabber isn't high on most people's list of youthful indiscretions. "When I was 14, I started hanging out with a little group of guys into hardcore and gabber techno," says 26-year-old Parisian Jackson Forgeaud. "I considered it non-music-complete shit. I told them this, and said that I could make one of these tracks in an afternoon using one synth and an Atari at my mom's house."

The initial results were patchy at best, but Forgeaud went back and made improvements, trying to win ever-elusive peer approval. By the age of 15, Forgeaud had released his debut, an acid house record on the French Pumpking label. Later, he brought out two EPs of thumping, filtered house on Sound of Barclay under the name Jackson and his Computer Band—they carved out an alternate niche to Daft Punk and Cassius' "French touch," resulting in plenty of early attention from the tastemaking British press.

Forgeaud eventually grew frustrated with the confines of the house scene, and locked himself in the studio to experiment with inspiring sounds, "wanting to mix the rave attitude with rock & roll, psychedelic and funk music." This approach led to two of Forgeaud's most notable releases to date, 2003's "Utopia" and his stunning Midnight Fuck remix of M83's "Run Into Flowers." The latter was a radiant, slightly stuttering version that retained the original's dreamy keys, while time-stretching the vocals and injecting a sense of restrained elation. The mix caught the attention of Kompakt label boss Michael Mayer, who included it on his *Fabric 13* mix CD, a move that brought Forgeaud's name to a much wider audience.

"Run Into Flowers" has a constant push/pull between restraint and excess that is repeated and magnified all over *Smash*, Forgeaud's recent debut for Warp Records. He describes the album as "a celebration of conflict" and says that he was obsessed with the clash between seemingly opposite themes, sounds and aesthetics.

"I used illogical time references, and found myself thinking a lot about the difference between club and home, what is funky and what is not and the space between major and minor keys," he explains. He also highlights his ideal of "antique futurism," making nostalgic music with modern production techniques.

The music on *Smash* is everything Forgeaud set out to do in his disillusioned post-house days. The record cribs from his early flirtation with glitch, '80s electro and funk but also emphasizes his early musical background as a drummer—albeit doing so via cut-up and recontextualized breaks.

Though the chopped-up, micro funk of Akufen and the glitch-hop of Prefuse 73 seem like logical points of reference for Forgeaud's music, he cites US garage producer Todd Edwards as a major influence on his sound; broader inspiration comes from the audiovisual din of modern cities and technology.

As for the samples used, Forgeaud sought to achieve the elusive, tip-of-your-tongue type of recognition mastered by the Avalanches or, most recently, Mylo's "In My Arms." "The dream is to create subversive pop with the sounds I use," he explains. "I tested my friends with the source material, to try to gauge how familiar they found [it]." It seems bemused frustration is what Forgeaud was looking for, evidenced by how the material stays just shy of being obvious, but not too deep as to be overly esoteric.

While rumors abound that Forgeaud already has enough source material for another album, he maintains that his hard drive is an absolute mess of unfinished pieces, and that the emphasis right now is on preparing for his forthcoming tour. He's just finished a remix of label mate Jamie Lidell's "Multiply," which should be released late this year, and he continues to work on new sonic components for his live performance—which he insists will contain interaction with the audience, and not glassy-eyed staring into a laptop.

But just as Forgeaud's career sprung from quite an unexpected place, don't be surprised if a new release comes to life organically through his experimentation. "I'm trying to make a hour of new music for the live performance," he says, "but I think this might end up being a completely different approach to making a record."

Jackson and His Computer Band's *Smash* is out now on Warp Records.

www.warprecords.com



KNOWING JACK

HOW JACKSON GETS HIS DISTINCTIVE SOUND.

Jackson's production ethic is a testament to the idea that you don't need a studio full of pricey equipment, provided your ideas are sound. His debut album, recorded both at home and in Paris basement studios, was made on a **Mac G4** running **Logic**. "During the making of the record I had to change my setup from place to place," says Jackson. "I don't even have a master keyboard; I'm working with the mouse." The only synth used on the record is a **Roland JX-3P**, which he describes as a "cheap '80s synth, but with a really cool sound." Within Logic, Jackson runs **Metasynth** and **Soundhack**, handling drum edits within the internal sampler and interfacing through an **MOTU 2408** Digital Audio device. He's currently working on a setup for his live show, and plans to use **Ableton Live** with "specially designed controllers to interact in real-time on the transformation of sound."

Clockwise from top left: Metasynth screenshot, Roland JX-3P, Soundhack spectral gate filter screenshot, MOTU 2408

In The Studio: PHILIP SMART

From Cocoa Tea to TOK, Philip Smart's HC&F Studio is New York's reggae central.
WORDS: JESSE SERWER PHOTOS: SARAH SMALL

It's hard to imagine any movement slipping through the cracks in New York, yet the story of reggae/dancehall here remains largely undocumented. Colored with artists like Sister Carol, Shinehead, Scion Sashay Success, Sammy Levi and, yes, Shaggy; labels like Wackies, Jah Life, Wittys and Mr. Doo; and soundsystems like Downbeat, King Addies and LP International, it's a legacy somewhat blurred by the dual citizenship of many of its practitioners.

One local institution whose clout cannot be denied, however, is Philip Smart's HC&F Studio, arguably the most significant and longest-running reggae studio in the US. Located just outside of New York City in Freeport, Long Island—the home of Flavor Flav—HC&F was founded in 1982 as an extension of a local trucking business run by relatives of Smart's (their first initials were H, C and F). The studio was built with the help of the band Monyaka, who would score an unlikely international dance hit with the funky, R&B-flavored "Go Deh Yaka," the first song ever recorded at the studio. Brooklyn-based producers like Jah Life and Whitfield "Witty" Henry would come to rely on HC&F, with major Jamaican stars like Horace Andy, Tenor Saw and Cocoa Tea following local artists into the vocal booth. Barrington Levy's "Murderer" was recorded here, as was the late Garnett Silk's haunting "Retreat Wicked Man," along with nearly every single that broke dancehall into American radio in the early 1990s: Shabba Ranks' "Mr. Loverman," Supercat's "Don Dada" and Shaggy's "Oh Carolina" and "Boombastic," to name a few.

But the story of HC&F begins in Kingston, where Smart grew up with Augustus Pablo in middle-class Havendale. After collaborating on the writing of

Jacob Miller's "Baby, I Love You So," he followed Pablo to King Tubby's, where he would witness the sessions that would ultimately comprise the legendary *King Tubby's Meets Rockers Uptown*.

"I'd be there every night after school, watching," Smart recalls from HC&F's wood-paneled Studio A. "Until one day Tubby get up and say 'Gwaan and take the vocals up.'"

Taking the name Prince Philip, Smart soon found himself mixing tracks like Johnny Clarke's "None Shall Escape the Judgment."

"Producers felt comfortable working with me so Tubbs could go on to the other business like building amplifiers. Eventually, Tubbs respect and trust me enough he gave me my own keys—he never trust nobody like that before, not even (Prince) Jammy."

A thirst for new techniques led Smart to New York, where he took a course in audio engineering at Electric Lady Studios. "They wasn't really teaching me much I didn't already know but the experience of being in New York led me to bring back some new ideas to Jamaica. This was the time when we brought in the sound effects—thunder, chains and gates closing, the oscillator tunes."

Relocating to New York for good in 1976 to attend the now-defunct School of Broadcasting and Announcing (he would go on to host WNYU radio's *Get Smart* for nearly 20 years), steady work from Brad's Records in the Bronx convinced Smart of a need for a 24-hour reggae studio in New York.

Ultimately, HC&F would find its niche at the dawn of the post-Sleng Teng computer production era.

"We built drum patterns for a lot of the sessions then so producers start to come here for that," Smart recalls. "Nobody was worrying about pro-



Philip Smart at the controls (right) with producer Devan Garnett (a.k.a. Part II) at HC&F Studio



Philip Smart (left) leads a session at HC&F Studio with reggae vocalist Sleepy Hollow Tip

duction credits—we were more interested in developing a sound. At that time it was all about one love and unity. We just wanted to hear some reggae played on WBLS.”

The fruits of this period can be heard on *5 Borough Fire*, a recently issued compilation on HC&F's new in-house reissues label, Street Platinum & Gold, which features Smart's sparse, bass-heavy productions for Scion Success and Nicodemus, among others.

Today the studio remains as relevant as ever: Hard Drive, Headache and All Out are among the riddims it has issued recently through VP and Greensleeves. Elephant Man, Vybz Kartel, TOK and Wayne Wonder, who recorded the bulk of his album *No Holding Back* here, are all familiar faces.

Like Tubby before him, Smart continues to mentor younger engineers and producers—alumni who continue to use the studio include Sting International, Chris Goldfinga and Eric “Big Jeans” Delisser. He's also adapted with the times, creating distinctive takes on today's manic dancehall riddims like the synth-heavy Project X, issued last year through VP.

“Dancehall represents originality to me in terms of music production, maybe because I have done so many decades of drum and bass,” Smart says. “But I think the original era of reggae needed to be represented.”

5 Borough Fire is out now on Street Platinum & Gold.
www.hcfrecording.com



ANALOG MASTER PHILIP SMART ON THE PROTOOLS ERA

WWW.DIGIDESIGN.COM

“The business is not about sound now, it's about songs. But I still incorporate my techniques from the past depending on the project I am working on and what it requires. I was just transferring something to two-inch from ProTools—a recording we did with Tony Curtis. I'll do that just to get that warmth. I'll dub a track on ProTools, transfer it to two-inch, put it back into ProTools and then mix the track.

“What I enjoy most [about digital recording] is that it's constantly a learning experience for me. I'm always going out and buying things to enhance the sound. We've actually been using ProTools since 1992 and Dirtsman's “Hot this Year,” and I'm still scratching the surface.”

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DEFINING THE INDUSTRY STANDARD

In the Studio: EZ ROLLERS

The dons of drumfunk employ the two-desk method for extra-large sounds.

WORDS: BRANDON IVERS PHOTO: SHEIKH AHMED



Jay Hurren, vocalist Kelly Richards, Alex Banks, MC Jakes

Jay Hurren and Alex Banks somehow make the term veteran producer seem woefully inadequate. Cutting their teeth on drum & bass during its early-'90s infancy, Hurren's work as JMJ & Richie was a crucial building block in the development of atmospheric d&b, while Banks helped define darkcore as a member of Hyper-On Experience. The two later joined forces in the mid-'90s to form EZ Rollers, producing inescapable anthems like the liquid funk blueprint "Tough at the Top." We had a chance to speak with Alex about how he approaches production these days, as well as the new EZ Rollers production pack for Reason.

Have you made the switch to using software for your production?

I do use a Mac with Logic Audio Platinum and ProTools. And I use the EXS-24 sampler in Logic, which is good... but I have a lot of outboard hardware. I really feel outboard gear has a sound that is a million miles different from software. Even if the gear is cheap, it brings something else to the sound, whereas software tends to only have one sound. There are so many instances where music that was made *only* in the computer lacks an awful lot of something. And trust me, I'd love to sack all this [hardware] and make music on the beach with a laptop, but it just doesn't end up as good. I think, realistically, you can achieve more musically and production-wise using hardware.

How important are dynamics in your mixing process?

I have two analog desks—a Mackie 8 Bus and a DDA Series D. I use both of those mixers to saturate the mix busses and record things back in. There is a sound you can achieve with saturating on a digital desk and it's fairly OK, but it's just not the same as an analog desk. The difference is that on an analog desk, when you go into saturation, you still have headroom. So even though you're saturating your sound, the dynamics of the transients are still in some way held together... whereas on a digital desk, the first thing that goes is the dynamics.

Do you think the technology available today has made it easier to translate your ideas to music?

Oh dear... I'm not sure. Back in the Hyper-On [Experience] days, it was more a case of "My God, what's happening now—let's get a DAT out." It was much more freeform than it is now. But in terms of translating the ideas in my head, it's really my experience with using equipment that has made it easier to realize my goals. And I know exactly what I can do in more defined areas. But there is less room for accidental creativity with what we use now, which is why I like to get away from the computer and work on sounds with other bits of kit.

You guys recently did the EZ Rollers production pack for Reason. What was this like in comparison to making tracks?

Well, we did the first [Zero-G] *Jungle Warfare* [sample CD], as well as *Jungle Frenzy*. [Those were] sort of stealth productions. So it was kind of working off what we'd done before. But with this particular Drum & Bass Producer Pack, a lot of the stuff simply came out of our tunes. So, in a way, it's a lot like making a track... if it's good, people will buy it. I didn't hold back on any of the sounds on there.

Now that you make music full time, does looking back on the whole process of getting to that point give you nightmares?

I used to work in [factory jobs] for years, and I worked to buy the gear I got. Back then, even £1000 hardly got you a sampler. But we did a record in 1989 that was just awful, and from there I didn't sign with [Moving] Shadow until 1992. Then I still worked my factory job until about 1997. So yeah, I definitely feel privileged to be doing this.

www.intercomrecordings.com



ZERO-G EZ ROLLERS DRUM & BASS PRODUCER PACK

MSRP: \$109.95, WWW.ZERO-G.CO.UK

Ask any longtime drum & bass producer about the sample CD *Jungle Warfare*, and you'll probably hear nothing but fond memories. Alex Banks and Jay Hurren of EZ Rollers fame produced that gem years back, so the release of this new sound collection is definitely reason for excitement. Absolutely up-to-date sounds that would fit in well with the liquid funk sound that EZ Rollers are known for, but more than useable for other styles as well. *Brandon Ivers*

The Beats and Bass Well, it *is* drum & bass, so it stands to reason this would be the best part. The breaks are punchy and layered, while the bass is defined and smooth.

Stabs and Ambient Sounds Ranging from downright creepy to smooth and melodic, there's plenty here to keep a track from stalling.

Meticulous Sound Design The collection maintains an excellent balance between sounding both professional yet gritty enough to use in anything from jungle to house to techno.

Multiple Sound Formats Pre-mapped patches are available for Logic Audio's EXS24, Halion, Reason, REX2 and Kontakt.

Quality Over Quantity Sample collections are usually loaded with embarrassing filler that sound like John Tesh recording outtakes. Good luck finding much of anything like that here.



Christian Kleine talks about Ableton Live in a company video.

LIVE AT FIVE

Ableton Live 5 as explained by German electronic heartthrob Christian Kleine.

WORDS: ROB GEARY VIDEO: JESSE TERRY

Christian Kleine has created shoegazer epics for Morr Music and City Centre Offices that combine rounded synthesizers, carefully crafted textures and live guitar that ranges from spacey to abrasive. By day he works on Ableton's pioneering Live music studio program, which took computer production out of the basement and onto the stage with a performance-friendly interface and a fast engine. Kleine took a moment to share the inside scoop on version 5 of Live.

"Live 5 is a logical progression and expansion of the Live concept," says Kleine. "One of our user's wishes was the integration of the mp3 format, which is a big step forward. This opens up the doors for everyone's personal music collection to be used for DJ purposes with all of Live's features." The Live Clips that make up the heart of any Live composition can now be comprised of any audio or MIDI data, including full MP3 songs, and can be exported to disk along with all associated effects for use in later projects, facilitating remixing ad infinitum.

It's now easier to mangle those Live Clips as well, as Kleine notes. "Live has the ability to

timestretch every audio file so that you can play various sounds together without taking care of the original tempo. Before, with longer pieces, you had to manually move Live's Warp Markers, which defined the grid of the timing. When this is achieved, you can easily add a different beat to an old song. In Live 5, we added a mechanism that automatically analyzes your music piece and places the Warp Markers in the correct places. This feature is called Auto Warping." This reworked Complex Warp Mode means entire Live projects can get warped again and again until musical reality completely inverts itself.

Live's greatest strength is its real-time manipulation of sound, so the improvements in that area are no joke. "Another great new feature of Live 5 is a very high quality timestretch algorithm that can be used to achieve good quality at even drastic tempo changes," Kleine notes. "This timestretch algorithm can be used quite musically, if you are into a glitch-n-granular kind of sound design." Older effects like the Simpler synthesis sampler are joined by new toys like the Saturator distortion machine, Arpeggiator (for both classic arpeggios plus guitar-

style strums) and Phasers and Flangers for that vintage Jimi Hendrix retro-future effect.

Sure to be a favorite is the new Beat Repeat effect, which Kleine says "makes it easy to chop audio into slices and make a 'stutter' effect." Random and controlled settings on the Beat Repeat make it easy to create endlessly evolving repeats and stutters to spice up tracks. "Also, you now have the ability to 'group' effect device chains and their settings for a general usage in your Live sets," reminds Kleine. "Don't forget that each of Live's effects parameters can be easily automated via Live's Clip envelopes or remote controlled via MIDI controllers. This makes Live extremely comfortable for sound design."

Live 5 brings powerful new capabilities alongside a host of minor refinements. It produces tunes at home and operates in live situations with aplomb, and now rips them apart with powerful remixing capabilities, whether you're after a carefully considered studio reworking or a stutter-heavy, effects-laden deconstruction in real-time.

www.ableton.com, www.morrmusic.com, www.city-centre-offices.de



Christian Kleine's personal Live screenshots; custom plugins that he created are shown at the bottom.

INSIDE LIVE 5: THE BEST FEATURES OF THE NEW ABLETON LIVE

MSRP. \$499; WWW.ABLETON.COM

Improved Interface Built-in browser for fast searches; preset management for deploying elaborate performance setups.

Clip Freeze Ease CPU limitations by freezing clips, apply power to tracks in use.

Plug-in Delay Compensation Automatically or manually delay tracks to make up for latencies in effects, plug-ins, hardware.

Mackie Control Support Ditch the mouse and control Live via hardware from Tascam, Mackie, Yamaha, etc.

HEAD TO HEAD: DJ MIXERS

HOW DOES THE INEXPENSIVE GEMINI PMX-05 10" MIXER STACK UP AGAINST NUMARK'S DXM09 DIGITAL MIXER?

DJ battle mixing, like street skateboarding, is in its third generation of development. Just as skating progressed from freestyle moves on flat asphalt to the era of mini-ramps and rails, and finally to current emphasis on courageous athletic tricks and reversed board stances, DJ battling has evolved into a complex musical art form. DJ battles today are equal parts musicality, tricks and turntable manipulation, with the mixer playing both an active and passive role in the performance. Once dominated by a handful of scratch DJs, including Invisibl Skratch Piklz, Xecutioners and the Beat Junkies, battling is now the domain of thousands of decksmiths around the globe. As DJ times have changed so, thankfully, have mixers, to a point now where built-in effects are the norm, and not merely an add-on. *XLRR* tested two battle-worthy mixers with onboard effects; here's how they scratched out. *Tomas Palermo*



NUMARK DXM09 DIGITAL MIXER

MSRP: \$499, WWW.NUMARK.COM

With over 28 mixer models in their line, Numark works hard to create the right fit for each DJ's needs. The **Numark DXM09 Digital Mixer** is no exception, with myriad features worthy of their reputation. DXM09 is a three-channel unit with a slim, rectangular profile. Unlike the Gemini's miniscule EQ knobs, the Numark DXM09 is equipped with bass, mid and high kill switches just above the cross-fader, which allow for quicker cut and kill routines. The DXM09's look-ahead peak limiting analyzes frequencies in both the output and headphone channels to ensure distortion-free playback. The 12 onboard effects (including several delays and echoes) can be tapped in time with your track or controlled via an automatic beat sync. Some friends' Numark faders have died a little prematurely from battle use, but these are replaceable items. For true battlers, the DXM09 has a few too many extraneous knobs that won't really enhance a scratch routine, but for blend DJs looking to add really high quality 24-bit sound, peerless EQ control and cool effects, DXM09 is your best bet.



GEMINI PMX-05 10" MIXER

MSRP: \$299.99, WWW.GEMINIDJ.COM

Time was, that Gemini was a name synonymous with cheap gear that couldn't hold up under prolonged use. Faders would get staticky and knobs would snap off. But things have changed, and Gemini's quality is now on par with some of the best mixers, while maintaining a budget pricepoint. The **Gemini PMX-05** is a two-channel mixer with a sleek surface layout and 10" square profile. I test drove the 26 onboard effects and faders using a variety of wax, from house to hip-hop singles. While some of the effects are mundane (vocoder, band pass, pitch shift) others were exceptional: a radical left-right pan, a saturated echo perfect for quick cut-outs and "decimate," which degrades any signal to dust! Effects are easily triggered via a very Pioneer-looking blue engage button. On the downside: while the bass, mids and highs offer complete frequency kills, the knobs are too small for anyone with more than pixie fingers. With a sturdy outer case, colorful LED display and standard battle features such as crossfader-reverse switch, mic input and replaceable magnetic faders, PMX-05 is a solid working-class mixer for all levels of DJs.

→ Get with the program at: www.propellerheads.se/workstation



Simi Valley, CA, USA
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MP3 ROUND-UP

FOUR ULTRA-COMPACT MP3 PLAYERS TO HIDE IN YOUR WAISTBAND.

The latest trend in digital music players is packing more features into smaller devices. Here are some standouts that deliver the goods, and take up less pocket real estate. *Ryan Sommer*



CREATIVE ZEN NANO 1GB

MSRP: \$129, WWW.CREATIVE.COM

It's a little known fact that Creative actually pioneered the menu system made infamous by the Apple iPod. They also happen to make pretty damn solid devices, specifically for the task of listening to MP3s. This player is an update to the company's Muvo line, which ruled the flash-based player school before the Shuffle came out. You get a FM radio, tons of EQ options, line-in recording (a rarity on a player this small) and 10 colorways.



MOBIBLU DAH 1500i 1GB

MSRP: \$130, WWW.MOBIBLUAMERICA.COM

The candy-sized 1500i will turn heads wherever you take it. Its eye-catching design is part of the reason—it's a square cube—but the other half of the equation is a lanyard-style headphone system that makes you the center spectacle of geektown. If you don't mind wearing an MP3 player around your neck though, the respectable 1-gig storage capacity and super-slick blue LED display make this a must have for those who wanna truly "Think Different."



IRIVER T10 1GB

MSRP: \$199, WWW.IRIVERAMERICA.COM

This little player is a pretty big deal. It's the first flash player to support Windows Media 10 sound files with built-in digital rights management, which means all the music you can eat at the online smorgasbords like Real Rhapsody and Napster To Go. Yeah, I thought they would be lame too, but having all that extraneous band info at your finger tips does really bring some validity to the whole "convergence" thing we are supposed to be experiencing. The downside? If your subscription expires, so does the music on your device.



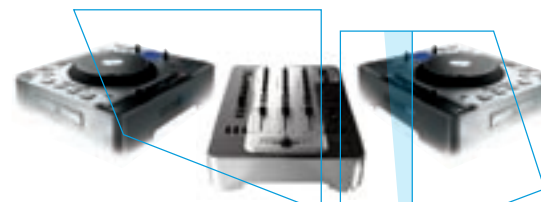
SKULLCANDY BLUNT

MSRP: FROM \$139, WWW.SKULLCANDY.COM

The Blunt is smaller and lighter than a pack of chewing gum, as long as you're chewing Bubblicious. But I assume you do if you plan to buy an MP3 player named "The Blunt." This underdog favorite from boutique audio outfit Skullcandy gets high marks for its sound quality and excellent encoding options. Variable bit-rate recording means you can set your MP3s to higher fidelity—if you don't care about losing some extra storage space. Just don't try and smoke it.



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MIXERS: RM.406 ^ RM.404 ^ RM.402 ^ M.304 ^ M.303

DJ Rap was sure she already owned the best CD player you could get. Then she laid her hands on the jog wheel of the Stanton C304. She scratched and beat juggled just like she was playing her favorite turntable. She adjusted the pitch from 8 to 100 percent and found the speed control was better than anything she had ever used before. She played with all the filters and effects and delays and started to smile. This was the best CD player she could get. So she took it. ^^DJ RAP ON TOUR: VISIT DJRAP.COM FOR TOUR DATES





KORG MICRO KONTROL 49 CONTROL DEVICE

MSRP: \$499.99, WWW.KORG.COM
 Making M-Audio's popular Oxygen 8 seem sparse is no small task, yet here we have an MPC-style bank of 16 velocity sensitive pads, 49 full-sized keys, eight faders and rotary encoders, an LED display screen and perhaps the ultimate soft-synth tool, a vector-based joystick. Living up to the *micro* namesake, it's really surprising how small Korg's **Micro Kontrol 49** MIDI controller is considering the amount of options it has. That's good for portability, but bad because features like the velocity pads are better sized for kids and carries than the large hands crew. *Brandon Ivers*

MODUL8 VJ SOFTWARE

MSRP: \$399, WWW.GARAGECUBE.COM
 As VJing continues to grow as an artistic medium, the desire for real time manipulation has grown with it. In previous years, VJs triggered acid freak-outs by modulating color filters; these days, software like **Modul8** takes it to the next level. Now you can do all sorts of things like transform the source video, allowing you to scale, rotate, flip and perform various other weird effects that make color filters seem pretty tame in comparison. Modul8 goes even further by allowing these transformations to be mapped to a MIDI controller. *Brandon Ivers*



ROLAND SP-404 PORTABLE SAMPLER AND RECORDER

MSRP: \$449, WWW.ROLANDUS.COM
 The **Roland SP-404** rhymes with 'more': more options, effects and memory. The 404 is a compact sampler made for on-the-go beatmakers and their recordings. But it's also become a staple in the dancehall soundsystem world for triggering samples like "Puuuuuuuuu up!", laser-beam zaps and Bounty Killer taunts. Place this sleek device to the side of your decks and you'll *slay* a soundboy in a second with your on-command arsenal. Add effects including chorus, flange, phaser, tremolo, BPM looper, overdrive, reverb, tape echo and more; create drum patterns and sequence WAV or AIF samples on the 12-pad pattern sequencer; record with a built-in mic; plus-zing!—it runs on batteries or AC. *Tomas Palermo*

MXL MICROPHONES DESKTOP RECORDING KIT

MSRP: \$149.95, WWW.MXLMICS.COM
 Like a lot of technology dunces, I too did not know what a podcast was until, like, just now. Apparently you can subscribe online to these homemade broadcasts that sound variously like radio shows, personal rants, replays of music mixes and news programs. People make 'em using a computer, recording software and a mic. If you're trying to be Ace Podstud, consider copping the **MXL Desktop Recording Kit**, which features an easy interface for Mac users. The MXL iBooster powers the mic and plugs directly into your Mac without the need for other outboard equipment. The DRK kit also comes with a stand, XLR cable, XLR to mini-plug adapter cable, 3.5mm mini-plug to quarter-inch adapter—basically, all the techy shit you need to get *Anarchy Now!* Radio up and casting! *Leonard Breshnev*



i PRACTICE
 i RECORD
 i PERFORM
 i RECORD



i leave my computer at home.



MACKIE TRAKTION 2 PRODUCTION SOFTWARE

MSRP, \$199, WWW.MACKIE.COM

Producing music with your computer shouldn't be up there with James Joyce and multivariable calculus on the difficulty scale, so **Mackie's Traktion 2** makes banging out beats a Curious George-level affair. Traktion is a multi-track recorder designed for the computer screen (à la GarageBand)—no silly visual frills, no illogical layouts intended to mimic ancient hardware, just a central main screen that uses obvious icons, buttons and attractive color for an intuitive and comfortable interface. Traktion is at its best when tinkering with loops and VST synths and effects doodads, but can handle an actual garage band, MIDI hardware or other software via audio-in, MIDI and ReWire inputs. *Rob Geary*



DENON DN-HP1000 DJ HEADPHONES

MSRP, \$199.99, WWW.DENON.COM

How many times have you tried to mix on a large sound system, only to hear nothing more than a trebly mess through your headphones? Denon might have found the perfect remedy for situations with the **Denon DN-HP1000s**. With relatively gigantic 53mm speaker drivers, these headphones deliver nicely detailed bass—just the thing to cut through all that extra noise at the club. And with a frequency response range that puts dog hearing to shame, you won't be hurting for detail in the rest of the audio spectrum either. *Brandon Ivers*



BLUE SNOWBALL USB DESKTOP MICROPHONE

MSRP, \$139, WWW.BLUEMIC.COM

PC or Mac users looking to record instruments or voice in a compact, stylish manner should seriously check out **Blue Microphones' Snowball USB**. That's right, USB connectivity and professional sound output from a thing that looks more edible than Hostess Snowballs ever did. No software installation is required, and three switchable mic patterns (cardioid, omnidirectional and cardioid -10dB) adapt to different recording situations. It's a straightforward recording mic that combines high-quality response with a space-saving elegant design. *Tomas Palermo*



ZERO-G DANCE PACK 1 AND WORLD PACK

MSRP, \$169, WWW.ZERO-G.CO.UK

Spend more than a few weeks working over GarageBand to make tracks and you'll get bored with the stock sounds—these bundles of samples are the solution. Each weighs in with over six gigs of loops and single hits taken from Zero-G's back catalog; bulk up your library of Apple Loops with sounds conveniently indexed and organized for GarageBand, Soundtrack and Logic 7 users (and available in AIFF form for other users). **Dance Pack 1** ranges from hip-hop construction kits to acid loops to processed acoustic breaks. **World Pack** travels from India to Ireland collecting not only loops, but also over 300 instruments designed to broaden your horizons. *Peter Nicholson*



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GIGSKINZ COFFIN CASE FOR DJs

MSRP, \$199.99, WWW.GIGSKINZ.COM
 You know you've "arrived" as an aspiring DJ when you're able to roll into the hot club, Ibiza party or, well, *wedding* with your own fur-lined equipment carrying case. **Gigskinz GSDJDNX** is designed to carry two Denon DNS100 CD players and the Denon DNX100 mixer in its removable hard inner tray. Just remove the tray, set it on a table, plug into an amp and you're ready to rock the place. The water-resistant carbon-fiber outer skin of the bag will protect you against stumbling drunk punters wielding pints of lager, the comfort molded shoulder straps will protect your back from an early retirement and the multiplicity of side-pockets and storage means your decks, headphones, CDs and cables all share the same happy home. *Derek Grey*



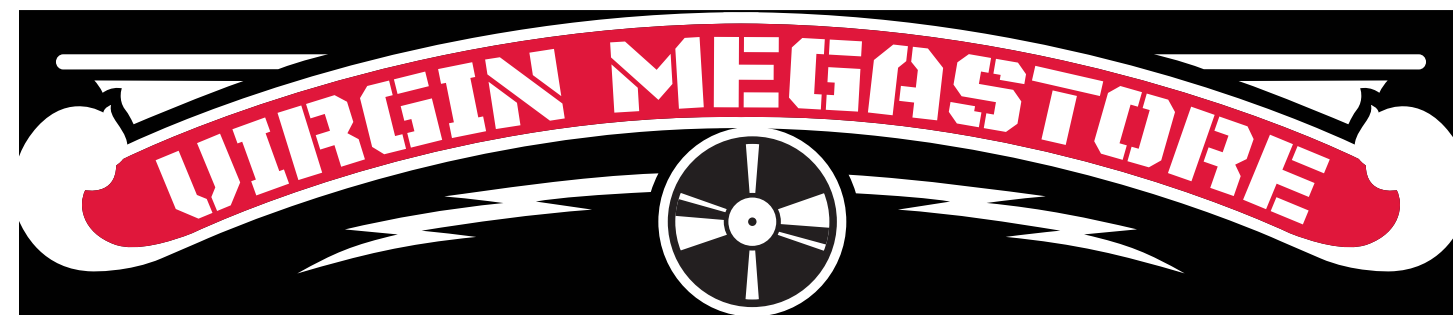
SOLITUDE NOISE CANCELING HEADPHONES

MSRP, \$199, WWW.SOLITUDEHEADSETS.COM
 Here's one strictly for the air travel massive! Nah, just kidding; looks like the airlines are all bankrupt, so your best use for **Solitude Noise Canceling Headphones** might just be for your next café laptop session. Nowadays, with wireless hotspots galore, you can't hear your tunes for all the hipster chatter, latte-foam steaming and keyboards tapping away. Solitude's super-comfy collapsible ear cups—designed by a former commercial airline pilot—offer 20 decibels of noise cancellation, and weigh less than eight ounces. Solitude also comes with a carrying case, two triple-A batteries, three (1/8, 1/4 and dual-pin) stereo adapters, and a detachable 1.5-meter cable. All that sounds a hell of a lot more reliable than any flight I've taken recently. *Tomas Palermo*



WIRELESS MUSIC SYSTEM FOR IPOD

MSRP, \$149.99, WWW.LOGITECH.COM
 How far is 33 feet? It's three stories high, a first down (10 yards) in football and a hell of a long way to travel from the sofa to the stereo to turn up the volume. Thankfully **Logitech's new Wireless Music System For iPod** rescues our lazy asses from the plight of getting up and fiddling with stereo controls while we're glued to the *New York Times Sunday Edition* and jamming the tunes. With its wireless transmitter fitted atop your iPod, and a music receiver connected to stereo or multimedia speakers, you can adjust track selection or volume right from your handheld device. Both adapters have their own rechargeable AC source, instead of sucking your precious Pod power. With a range of 33 feet, the only getting up you'll do is for the loo. *David Hahn*



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FOCUSRITE SAFFIRE AUDIO INTERFACE

MSRP: \$499, WWW.FOCUSRITE.COM

Focusrite's first entry into the world of FireWire "desktop-style" audio interfaces, the **Focusrite Saffire** attempts to fuse the company's rock-solid hardware design with on-board, highly integrated software. Four inputs (two digital) and 10 outputs (two digital) set the stage, while software plug-ins for compression, EQ, amp modeling, and foldback reverb sing the chorus. The application floats over any recording software and allows control over the sound of the recorded signals and the separate monitor/headphone output paths, without burdening the processor. *Evan Shamoon*



LAPTOP JOCKEY FLATPACK2 SOUND LIBRARY

MSRP: \$90, WWW.LAPJOCKEY.COM

From the team behind Reason Factory Sound Bank, **Laptop Jockey's FlatPack 2** is built largely around four new instrument concepts constructed within Reason's Combinator environment. Kilburn is a framework for re-creating classic synths; Scope is a family of Combinators for generating soundscapes, pads, textures and just about any kind of rich evolving sound beds; Boxmoor is a Combinator-based drum machine; and Rex Dex is a collection of Rex-based loop players. Somehow, Reason's sonic possibilities just got even more endless. *Evan Shamoon*



M-AUDIO MICROTRACK PORTABLE DIGITAL RECORDER

MSRP: \$499, WWW.M-AUDIO.COM

M-Audio's MicroTrack may be the answer for musicians looking to do field recordings: the mobile two-channel digital recorder writes WAV and MP3 files directly to CompactFlash or microdrives, via either balanced line inputs or built-in high-fidelity microphone preamps. The unit then connects to your PC or Mac via USB, allowing for easy drag-and-drop management of recordings. While the high price point presents an initial hurdle, the small size (just larger than an iPod) and digital convenience present quite a convincing counter-argument. *Evan Shamoon*



CIRCUIT BENDING BOOK

SOFTCOVER, WILEY, MSRP: \$29.99, WWW.WILEY.COM

Subtitled "Build Your Own Alien Instruments" and "How To Get New Noise From Old Toys," *Circuit-Bending* is by no means a subtle package. If you can get past the garish cover art and self-congratulatory introduction from author and "father of circuit bending" Reed Ghazala, you'll find a book brimming with secrets for the would-be Speak & Spell solderer. Chapters walk you through opening Casio and Fisher-Price units up safely, marking the circuit board, drilling, soldering, testing, reassembling and musicality. Master parts (like banana plugs, wires, buttons and knobs) are described by their Radio Shack part number for easy access; multiple diagrams and images paint a clear picture of what the hell you're supposed to be doing. A quality read for the beginner or vet toy tweaker. *David Hahn*



be prepared



NOUVEAU RICHE

PHOTOGRAPHER: DANA LOIA (WWW.DANALOIA.COM)
STYLIST: MICHAEL COHN
MODELS: TUAN, LAUREN, JASON AND MELISSA
SHOT ON LOCATION IN LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK



Lauren wears hoodie and pants by Triple 5 Soul, cape, blazer, hat, scarf, tights and shoes model's own.
Tuan wears parka by Triple 5 Soul, blazer and scarf by Plague Collective, bottoms by Motoomi Baba and vintage shoes.
Jason wears coat by Spiewak, pants by Levi's and a vintage necklace and belt.



Tuan wears blazer by Subscript, sweater by Adidas, shirt by Costume National, pants by Adidas, shoes by Y3 for Adidas, a vintage tie and a necklace by Bijules NYC.



Jason wears shirt by Motoomi Baba, pants by Triple 5 Soul, necklace by Bijules NYC and vintage tie, hat and suspenders. Melissa wears shirt by Neighborhood, corset and bottoms by Mari Kussman, earrings and machine gun accessory by Bijules NYC and her own tights.

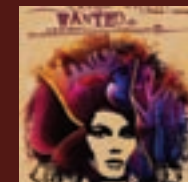


Jason wears Levi's jeans and vintage shirt, scarf and vest.
 Melissa wears dress by Mari Kussman and vintage accessories.



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 Land Shark, Ulysses, Justin
 Maxwell, Ashuffle, Lusine,
 Kelvin K, John Selwoy, Alex
 Smoke and Echologist.



WANTED, VOL 2,
 Featuring Prefuse 73,
 Zion I, Fingathang,
 Aeroc, Ulrich Schnauss,
 Blockhead, Colder,
 Systemwide, Nudge, Kid
 606 and Ezekiel Honig



WANTED, VOL 3,
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BOARDS OF CANADA

ALBUM REVIEWS 11.05

BOARDS OF CANADA
THE CAMPFIRE HEADPHASE
Warp/UK/CD



ONE OF ELECTRONIC
MUSIC'S MOST
MYSTERIOUS AND
ORIGINAL DUOS
TRAVERSES THE
CROSSROADS.

Boards of Canada's 1998 classic, *Music Has the Right to Children*, fostered a whole sub-genre of "pastoral IDM" and drove countless bedroom musicians to revisit youths spent indulging in hip-hop and watching Canadian science documentaries. The album was a heady introduction to BoC's daydreams—tinged with old nightmares, hallucinations of splendors both lived and pretended, shadows of David Koresh and fallen scientists gazing at the stars from the stumps of clear-cut forests and the rooftops of cities sunken into seas.

So groundbreaking was *Music...* that BoC has been both forgiven and criticized for barely changing their trademark sound for a decade. With their latest album, *The Campfire Headphase*, the duo of Marcus Eoin and Michael Sandison is caught at a crucial point: are they elders marking a triumphant return or has-beens about to be eclipsed by their students?

Campfire's cover—a faceless kid in a melted Polaroid—and its awkward title revisit *Music...* As on that classic, a few of these songs chase moments of awe or curiosity that disappear before they can be truly grasped. The utterly mesmerizing "A Moment of Clarity" floats the mind into air for less than a minute, while "Ataronchronon's" scraping timbres are akin to having blinding sunlight shut off the world around you.

Campfire often suffers from tepidness—little haunts the imagination and no tension keeps things together. But even with the drawbacks, BoC is still moving forward. The most striking change is their use of fireside, acoustic guitar riffs that add spaciousness to their songs. "Chromakey Dreamcoat" loops a dirge that blows into the wind, leaving ghostly traces. The guitarwork adds to the album's listlessness, sometimes sleepwalking its way to heaven as on the brilliant "Tears From the Compound Eye."

But on numbers like "Hey Saturday Sun" and "Dayvan Cowboy," it seems as though BoC is following paths cleared by those they inspired: Bibio's disintegrating ballads from the English hinterlands, Four Tet's porch-sitting hip-hop. "Oscar See Through Red Eye" and "Slow This Bird Down" are lukewarm trip-hop numbers, while "84 Pontiac Dream" is hypnotic but wearisome, repeating the same beats and somber hits of melody. Elsewhere on *Campfire*, Eoin and Sandison can be found serving up play-by-the-numbers, shoegazing indie pop.

Campfire's finale, "Farewell Fire," returns to the same crossroads BoC visited on 2002's *Geogaddi*. That record had two endings, one hopeful and the other empty. "From One Source All Things Depend" (from the Japanese edition) was a sound collage of kids talking about God's nature, while "Magic Window" (from the non-Japanese version) contained nothing but silence. As for "Farewell Fire," it's a church wedding ballad that is barely there—a placid, looped melody that endures for nearly eight minutes before it fades into silence. It finds BoC reopening the magic window, but where they will go from here is anyone's guess. *Cameron Macdonald*



THE REBIRTH
THIS JOURNEY IN

Kajmere/US/CD
From the first mellow tones and luscious vocals, it's obvious this album is good shit—even if its range isn't the broadest. A combination of funk, soul and jazz, the LA-based septet recalls predecessors like Soul II Soul, Brand New Heavies and Earth Wind & Fire, but avoids slavish imitation. Standouts include "Every Body Say Yeah," in which Noelle Scaggs' warm vocals (urging you to "celebrate if you feel it") are joined in lush harmony with vocals from other band members, and the danceable, gently Brazilian-inflected "Talking Me Down." "Stay Away" is a laid-back gem, and the title track is simply addictive. The band members have ridiculously polished resumes, and have worked with names like DJ Babu, Ozomatli and Breakestra—their musicianship is manifest. The layers of groove—smooth bass, deeply warm vocals and blues-laden keyboards—make this an easy journey to join in on. *Luciana Lopez*



AFRICAN BROTHERS/KING TUBBY
AFRICAN BROTHERS MEETS KING TUBBY IN DUB

Nature Sounds/US/CD
You can't really go wrong with Tubby, especially when the work is with an obscure yet significant act like the African Brothers, a vocal group that launched the career of Sugar Minott. But usually reliable hip-hop indie Nature Sounds' latest foray into the reggae reissue market is problematic. If you're going to transfer from vinyl to CD, at least find some clean 45s—the pops and crackles here are not novel or endearing, just kind of annoying. That said, I also wish I could tell you if these recordings really date as far back to 1968—when Minott would have been 12—and whether the track titled "Dick Head Dub" was really called that upon release. *Jesse Serwer*

MULATU ASTATKE
FROM NEW YORK TO ADDIS ABABA: THE BEST OF MULATU ASTATKE

Soundway/UK/CD
With Mulatu Astatke's signature tune "Yegelle Tezeta" making a star turn in Jim Jarmusch's *Broken Flowers*, now's a great time to collect some of the Ethiopian jazz great's works onto CD—even though the *Ethiopiques* series already did so a couple of years ago. About half the tracks here weren't on that comp, though, which is a good enough reason to check out some of the wildest, freest grooves in all of late

'60s/early '70s swinging Africa. While anchored with Afro-Cuban rhythms and Jimmy Smith-style Hammond jazz, an eclectic array of instruments and the loose musicianship and howls of Astatke's backing band created a sound that today sounds strikingly surreal. With its discordant use of steel drums, "Asiyo Belema" sounds as ethereal as any early dub recording. Classic material. *Jesse Serwer*

ATMOSPHERE
YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW MUCH FUN WE'RE HAVING

Rhymesayers/US/CD
Rapper Slug and producer Ant of Atmosphere are veterans of making great rap records. With stellar releases *Lucy Ford* and *Overcast* under their belt, *You Can't Imagine...* marks the Minnesotan duo's eighth year of music collaboration. Although Ant's beats have greatly improved and Slug remains effortlessly thoughtful, tracks like "Bam," "The Arrival" and "That Night" sound like uninspired b-sides—as does most the album. "Little Man" and "Hockey Hair" are definite highlights, but aren't enough to redeem a disappointing 11-tracker. Although *You Can't Imagine...* would be a solid release by most standards, it falls short of Atmosphere's past efforts. *David Ma*

AUDION
SUCKFISH

Spectral Sound/US/CD
As Audion, Detroit's Matthew Dear banishes his suave-crooner persona and gets busy laying down his hardest, most extroverted and lubricious grooves. *Suckfish* is potent, banging techno designed for, well, banging—and for its usual prelude, dancing. DJs needing floor-filling fodder for folks who like it tough and hypnotic won't likely find a better full-length this year. The ping-pong, piston-chugging hypno-stomp "Vegetables" sets the tone for Audion's approach, which is reflected by *Suckfish*'s dazzling Op-art cover. "Kisses" sounds like an unholy alliance between early Plastikman and Alter Ego, while the plowing grinder "Just Fucking" evokes the Voigt brothers' compelling monomania. The ruggedly sexy *Suckfish* is pure baby-making genius. *Dave Segal*

BANTU FEATURING AYUBA
FUJI SATISFACTION

Piranha/GER/CD
It's easy to confuse toasts to *fuji* music with shout-outs to The Fugees—like Wyclef and crew, this eclectic album casts a cultural net over many musical styles. But this record goes a little deeper. A group of German and Nigerian musicians creates a head-bobbing mix of Islamic singing, polyrhythmic drumming, Western guitar lines and buoyant brass. Add a variety of lyrical styles, like gruff dancehall and uplifting, sing-song rapping, and you have *fuji*, a style popular in Nigeria. Vocalists Adé Bantu and Adewale Ayuba hold court over the shuffling, joyous sounds of a worthwhile, though not world-changing, cultural exchange. *Patrick Sisson*

THE BOATS
WE MADE IT FOR YOU

Moteer/UK/CD
The Boats' second album is based largely—and at times solely—around a piano. Occasionally, a sequencer makes itself known via some stuttery passages, and a half-hearted kick-drum surfaces at one point, too; but, for the most part, it's just piano. Such a bare bones approach results in a fragility and intimacy that is sometimes so acute you feel like an intruder (the track titles, which are all people's Christian names, don't help in this respect); elsewhere, though, *We Made It For You* is as comforting as a favorite chair. *Dave Stenton*

BREAKESTRA
HIT THE FLOOR

Ubiquity/US/CD
When Miles Tackett put baby teeth under his pillow, he woke up sleeping on scattershot snare beats; on Christmas morning, Tackett's granny left Rickey Calloway howls and funky flute vibes under the tree. It paid off. On the new, all-original Breakestra album, Tackett & Co. drop 14 of the stankiest live breakbeat funk tracks of this age. From the relentless opening salvo of "Stand Up"—the new "Internationale" of funk—to vibey instrumental numbers (flute thang "Burgundy Blue"; Rhodes workout "How Do You Really Feel") to Mixmaster Wolf's thick-maned vocals, *Hit the Floor* does so runnin' and never lets up. *Justin Hopper*

CURUMIN
ACHADOS E PERDIDOS

Quannum/US/CD
Curumin's new album is a refreshing intake of eclectic fusion. Subtly combining Afro-beat and samba rhythms with funk and hints of hip-hop, *Achados e Perdidos* reflects

this Brazilian beatmaker's genuine melodic sensibilities; tracks like "Guereireiro," "You Haven't Done Nothing" and "Samba Japa" are not only gruelingly rhythmic but completely sung, produced and composed by Curumin himself. But even though this debut is charming, it lacks cohesiveness and contains a handful of throwaway songs that reduce the overall charisma of the album. *David Ma*

CYNE
EVOLUTION FLIGHT

City Centre Offices/GER/CD
Cyne may very well be the first hip-hop act to put Gainesville, Florida on the map. And with their cool, calm and collected sound, they let it be known that their relatively remote city is worth keeping an eye on. With their sophomore album, *Evolution Flight*, Cyne's MCs Akin and Cise Star drop bars for social change, but they do so in a more even-tempered manner (à la Zion I) than most revolutionaries on the mic. And producers Speck and Enoch create refined melodies suited for enjoyment in a pair of headphones rather than your subwoofers. They may not be in your face screaming "revolution," but their message of progression is heard loud and clear. *Max Herman*

RICHARD DAVIS
DETAILS

Kitty-Yo/GER/CD
It's all in the details, they say, and with Richard Davis' third full-length, they couldn't be more right. At once an intimate and a social affair, from studio to the salon to the dancefloor, this album plays out as both as both the perfect blend of minimal house and a real deal artist album. Deep grooves, yes, but there are lyrics too; and they don't suck! The disc goes somewhere between Deep Dish and Swayzak, and even subtly nods to Brian Eno/Bowie's "Berlin Trilogy"—how appropriate for an Englishman who has also made Berlin his base of operations. *Daniel Sivek*

DIGABLE PLANETS
BEYOND THE SPECTRUM: THE CREAMY SPY CHRONICLES

Blue Note/US/CD
In the midst of the West Coast hip-hop takeover of 1993, Digable Planets' unique brand of beat poet, speakeasy hip-hop was a welcome breath of fresh air. But a decade-long hiatus can spell death to even the most celebrated of careers. Blue Note issues this "best of & B-sides" collection as a teaser for Digable's reunion album of all new material in '06. For now, the esoteric musings, cool jazz and incense that wafts from tracks like the remix of "Where I'm From" and "Three Slim's Dynamite" (the latter from the Japanese pressing of *Blowout Comb*) will definitely suffice. *Rico "Superbizee" Washington*

EL MICHEL'S AFFAIR
SOUNDING OUT THE CITY

Truth & Soul-Fast Life/US/CD
Warning: the dusty, instant vintage grooves of El Michaels Affair may be corrosive to your working knowledge of blue-eyed soul, especially after rocking the house backing Raekwon this summer. From 2004's super funky "Detroit Twice" to the Isaac Hayes cover "Hung Up On My Baby," these cats lay down dynamite instrumental soul with just enough distortion and tin can reverb to rival Sharon Jones' Dap-Kings (ironically, the two bands share interchangeable members). Revamped from the defunct Soul Fire Records, Truth & Soul is poised to peddle its relics to the masses. Putney Swope is somewhere smirking right about now. *Rico "Superbizee" Washington*

GANG OF FOUR
RETURN THE GIFT

V2/US/CD
Half of Gang of Four's power was unspoken. Jon King's calls into the night about everyday life among the living dead were matched by guitarist Andy Gill's equal hits of clarity and chaos, and a thrash-funk rhythm section contradicted the horrors with a demand that everyone do The Hustle. Sadly, the power of the most lyrically and musically profound UK punk band was diminished when they later became a hipster name-drop. On *Return the Gift* King's declarations are still arresting and the rhythms still push over cars. Unfortunately, there are losses: Gill's riffs are dulled with distortion and sound pitifully generic, while many key touches, like the guitar tick-tocks on "Why Theory?" and the trapkit smacks on "Not Great Men," are muted. Do King's alarms still ring in our time? Yes. Is this record an excuse not to hear the original songs? Absolutely not. *Cameron Macdonald*

DELIA GONZALEZ & GAVIN RUSSOM
THE DAYS OF MARS

DFA/US/CD
When I think DFA, I think disco balls, sweaty white kids smiling and dancing around and the adolescent heat of summer. Thankfully, *The Days of Mars* is the atmospheric gem this

carefree world needs. These four spacious songs are layered with synth loops so hypnotic, you'll find yourself comatose eight minutes into the first track. In the world of Delia Gonzalez and Gavin Russom, every piano key struck over the plush wall of sound is like a precise needle to flesh. Imagine Brian Eno floating in space with some mescaline and a book of mantras. Nod out, space out and embrace the epic. *Fred Miketa*

PETER GRUMMICH
SWITCH OFF THE SOAP OPERA

Shitkatapult/GER/CD
Technoheads have long revered Peter Grummich for delivering (under infinite pseudonyms) what seems to come naturally from his home turf of Berlin: 20 years of DJing and producing, with little deviation from the kind of lean, minimalist lines that make techno purists weep for joy. Predictably, *Switch...* offers Grummich's signature blend of hypnotic melody and deep, dubby basslines, which has made him a natural fit for labels like Kompakt, Ghostly and Shitkatapult; expect mostly loop-friendly tracks better suited for mixing than listening, though. And too bad the grainy cover art looks like everybody forgot about it until the last minute. *Janet Tzou*

MARC HELLNER
ASLEEP ON THE WING

MARRIAGES
Peacefrog/UK/CD
As part of Pulseprogramming, Marc Hellner helped assemble gorgeous tunes that melded acoustics and electronics and incorporated

artists and poets in live performance. On his own, Hellner takes the same musical approach in a personal direction. Both *Marriages* and its companion EP, *Asleep on the Wing*, are doused in midtempo lullaby pop that recalls Lali Puna's spacier moments. When Hellner adds his own understated vocals and wistful lyrics, the mix is pitch-perfect: "Handshaking" opens with an ambient wash before accelerating into an electronic state of grace, while the instrumentals juxtapose weepy strings and sharp programming. *Rob Geary*

HIMURO
MILD FANTASY VIOLENCE

Zod/US/CD
The schizophrenic beats of Fukuoka, Japan's Yoshiteru Himuro ricocheted off experimental labels in Australia and London before landing in Zod's Milwaukee, Wisconsin outpost with the force of a Galaxian flagship. Excepting a lazy broken beat here and ominous belches of sound there ("The Cracks in Your Monita" could be Tech Itch on Robitussin), Himuro suggests a spazzed-out nature, eyes bugged and attention shot from growing up haunted by 16-bit ghosts. Notches above novelty, "Button of Reset" (which sounds like you'd expect) is well composed enough to throw trendy arcade kitsch on a permanent tilt. *Rachel Shimp*



THE DRIFT
NOUMENA

Temporary Residence/US/CD
Sporting slow motion, incandescent incantations and miles of majestic instrumental *magick*, San Francisco's The Drift post-rock so hard they think nothing of teasing four minutes of hazy gaze three times over until it becomes a 12-minute epic. Herein lies their triumphant strength: they allow each instrument the space and context to develop and abstract—the longer the songs, the better they are. Battling for conceptual cornerstone are the glimmering guitar of Tarentel's Danny Grody and Jeff Jacobs' bastard *Bitches Brew* fusion trumpets and flugelhorns—every other instrumental band should be terrified about now. *Brian Paul*



I WAYNE
LAVA GROUND
VP/US/CD

With a voice as soft as Garnett Silk—the late reggae crooner to whom he’s often compared—I Wayne’s seductive style burns with a fire that desires righteousness. The single “Can’t Satisfy Her” issues participants in the skin trade this warning: “*Flames and fire...bum di flesh, seller, and the buyer.*” On “Bleacher,” I Wayne sets ablaze those who use bleaching cream to lighten their skin color. Throughout, the Portmore, Jamaica native uses beautiful melodies and one-drop riddims to celebrate life and chant down the whores of Babylon. With *Lava Ground*, I Wayne erupts as a major elemental force in Jamaican music. *James Mayo*



JACKSON AND HIS COMPUTER BAND
SMASH
Warp/US/CD

Existentialist electronic Frenchman Jackson simultaneously does Camus and Rimbaud proud, wasting not one fantastical yoctosecond of precious album space. Crammed with synapse-shattering digitalia like a towering Atkins-unaware cannoli of death—*Smash* features layer upon impossibly imploding layer of visionary sound—its brilliance physically hurts. Jackson manages the near impossible feat of boasting guest vocalists, yet assimilates their contributions into an bricolaged treatise. Even Mike Ladd’s not annoying in this context—his pouty, prep-school rap is treated as aural ammunition. *Smash* introduces Jackson as a formidable talent. *Brion Paul*



INDUCE
CYCLE

Wonder Sound/US/CD

Induce gives the impression that he feels more comfortable amidst notes and beats than any cruder tools of language. *Cycle* swells with tremendous feeling; from lonely flute notes on the syncopated jazz-drum exercise “Call” to the late ’80s hip-hop MC valentine “Rebirth’s Reprise” (featuring excerpts from *Good Will Hunting*) to “A Wave of Calm Before the Warm,” where sweeping chords of electronic noise pound against 4/4 beats as inexorably as the ocean surf. As a result, *Cycle* is a vibrant listen, gleaming with clear moments of quiet beauty and breezing through divergent genres seamlessly. Some throwaway tracks, like “System Mechanic,” make more promises than they actually deliver; it’s a small gripe however, especially as Induce’s emotional articulation is otherwise so enthralling. Easily one of 2005’s more sophisticated finds. *Janet Tzou*

EMMANUEL JAL & ABDEL GADIR SALIM
CEASEFIRE

Riverboat/UK/CD

If Cheb I Sabbah produced African Head Charge with guests Tricky, MC Solaar, Thomas Mapfumo, Youssou n’Dour, Cheb Mami and dead prez, it might sound something like *Ceasefire*, the groundbreaking collaboration between rapper Emmanuel Jal and musician/muezzin Abdel Gadir Salim. More of a typical world beat album than your average nu-skoool global rap joint, *Ceasefire* is awash with the kind of anthemic musical statements long associated with the genre: vocal chanting, syncopated percussion, flowing, multilayered grooves, traditional arrangements and an overall tribal feel. The twist is that the two artists are from opposite sides of Sudan, a nation embroiled in ethnic genocide of the worst kind, which makes peace-affirming songs like “Ya Salam,” “Gua” and “Aiwa” all the more poignant. *Eric K. Arnold*

JT THE BIGGA FIGGA
WHO GRIND LIKE US?

Get Low/US/CD

A San Francisco staple and owner of Get Low Records, JT the Bigga Figga is a rapper and a certified hustler. After *The Game* blew up early this year, the ace businessman cashed in and released a series of tracks the West Coast rookie recorded years ago in his own studio. On *Who Grind Like Us?*, his latest self-released album, JT raps like he runs his company—independently, but with an ear to the street. Full of astute wordplay and gritty, banging production, this album should be blasting out of car speakers in the Bay and beyond. *Patrick Sisson*

JUST ONE
LOVEMUSIC

Nebula/JPN/CD

Just One has a formula—thick and crunchy beats plus Justin Chapman’s molasses soul vocals—and damn it works well. You know the single, that which has been moving broken beat floors in all sorts of different mixes (“Love2Love”), but here Just One proves they have more than just one trick up their sleeve. With swerving hip-hop soul on “Regeneration,” spaced-out beatscapes with a sermon from Rich Medina on “In Between” and a queasy but delightful pairing of acid burps and jazz guitar on “Questions,” they find multiple outcomes from their unique formula. *Peter Nicholson*

KUDU
DEATH OF A PARTY

Nublu/US/CD

From No Wave and East Village punk to electro and freestyle, Kudu captures the spirit of an entire lifetime of Big Apple radio with unflinching style, energy and innovation. Vocalist Sylvia Gordon is an icon in the making, a sassy combination of Siouxsie Sioux and Poly Styrene had they been part of a Nublu scene once home to Norah Jones and Brazilian Girls. Her rich, voguish delivery fits perfectly into a minimal yet surprisingly chunky mix of keys, percussion and production. *Death of A Party* is like packing a single bag for an entire week’s vacation. Bring a few winning outfits, creatively rearrange, and you’re good to go. *Steve Marchese*

LADYTRON
WITCHING HOUR

Ryko/US/CD

Ladytron keeps the effects-laden vocals they’re known for, but their blankly cool sound takes on a (slightly) greater range. Opener “High Rise,” for instance, grinds with reverb-filled rock. “Destroy Everything You Touch,” with the synthetic catchiness that made “Seventeen” such a hit, drives even harder. Not everything works: breakup track “International Dateline” should be far more brutal, but instead feels, well, a lot like everything else. “Amtv” tries to be Devo, but there’s only room for one Devo. Even with its industrial tilt, this album has plenty of ear candy—it’s pleasant, if not quite tasty. *Luciana Lopez*

LMNO
P’S & Q’S

Up Above/US/CD

In this case, you can judge the rapper by the cover. LMNO, an acronym for Leave My Name Out, is the handle of LA rapper James Kelly, a member of the Visionaries crew. The name is precious, clever and tries a little too hard, much like the rapper does on his third solo album. Kelly has no problem with formulating deep thoughts on life and politics and spinning them into lyrics; he does it with aplomb. It’s his occasionally chunky and dry delivery that spoils things. Even the solid production barely makes this album okay. *Patrick Sisson*

LOER VELOCITY
LOE NOISE REDUCTION

Cajo Communications/USA/CD

New York MC Loer Velocity can kick an intellectual flow or break out the standard ode to weed (“Highed Up!”), but it’s hard to grasp exactly who this long-time special guest really is. “Industry Standard,” with Oktober, L.I.F.E. Long and Vast Aire, is the highlight here, but Loer graces his own track for barely a minute. Alone, “Touch Me Not” proves his laid-back phrasing works best on the choruses; a few zingers can’t save the verses, but the surreal storyteller “Dreamscape” comes late and proves Loer could grow into an American Slick Rick with time. *Rob Geary*

LO-TEK HI-FI
MIXED BLESSINGS

Big Dada/UK/CD

Fuck grime. Lo-Tek Hi-Fi don’t cater to trends; the sound-system stylee they display on *Mixed Blessings* is much more a case of hardcore electro-ragga originality than garage-meets-crunk predictability. Imagine T.O.K. under ’nuff Guinness and a considerable amount of hashish spliffs, and that’s the Lo-Tek vibe, *inni!* This UK bashment music is just as orchestrated and well-arranged as its Jamaican dancehall-pop counterparts (and, like TOK, features a baritone MC), but Lo-Tek—while skilled at hooks, choruses and what-not—eschews obvious commerciality in favor of a much more underground flavor. With all this rude boy attitude going on, you’d expect Roots Manuva to show up, which he does on “Move Ya Ting.” But this is Lo-Tek’s show, and they run it red enough to request many rewinds. *Eric K. Arnold*

RICH MEDINA
CONNECTING THE DOTS

Kindred Spirits/NETH/CD

When not pleasing partygoers with his airtight selection, DJ Rich Medina continually solidifies his rep as a soul music composer. On his debut, *Connecting the Dots*, he creates jams that range from politically vexed spoken word on “BBoys to Men” to the upbeat dancefloor motivator “Out of Nothing,” with helpings of Afrobeat, funk and jazz in between. “Chocklit Ninja” sports a mix of slick percussion and ethereal keys. With plenty of dreamy vocals and lounge-suitable grooves, the album maintains an unrefined feel that makes it not a color by numbers sketch but a solid work of soul-hued art. *Aqua Boogie*

MISC.
LIKE MORNING IN YOUR EYES

Sender/GER/CD

Sender reinforces its radioactive, packed-grit techno foundation with a proper LP from the Misc. duo. Contrary to the romantic implications of its title, *Like Morning* is a salvo of floor-crunching techno ranging from the superbly scathing robotics of “Rather Alive” to the fuse-burning funk of “Shadow Hunting.” There’s not a dud in the bunch. The absolute anthem on this album is “Metroland,” which captures the spirit of the 5:00 a.m. Cologne dancefloor like very few tracks ever have. Driving, psychedelic and mechanical all at once, *Like Morning* is proof-positive that techno is born again hard. *Doug Morton*

MR. OIZO
MOUSTACHE (HALF A SCISSORS)

Mute/UK/CD

Nothing seems to work right on *Moustache*, and that is its saving grace. Playing Daft Punk and Prefuse 73 records after leaving them to melt in a car trunk could be a somewhat accurate description. Quentin “Mr. Oizo” Dupieux’s electro-funk rhythms fall flat on their faces, while his ’80s retro-trash synth melodies sound like filthy Nintendo cartridges that need to be blown into. The “glitch” element here is tasteless, as when the broken-footed funk of “(ee)” is interrupted by a dying robot declaring “This is computer music, shoot or die!” Nonetheless, there is a ridiculous funkiness as things fall apart into a spectacular mess. *Cameron Macdonald*

MÚM
YESTERDAY WAS DRAMATIC, TODAY IS OK

Morr/GER/CD

Last year’s *Summer Make Good* was the sound of a lighthouse being abandoned by its tender: creaking wood, climbing waves, flickering candles and empty pantries. It’s a somber progression from 2002’s twinkling *Finally We Are No One*, and Múm’s experimental debut *Yesterday* outshines both. Released on Icelandic label Thule in 2000, Múm lost the rights to it until this year. The chamber lullabies they’re known for evolved from *Yesterday*’s tangle of clicks, like the gorgeously dense, nine-minute “Smell Memory.” As Múm’s current trajectory takes them further out to sea, *Yesterday* is a treasure chest of gems from that same locale. *Rachel Shimp*

MURCOF
REMEMBRANZA

Leaf/UK/CD

Former Nortec Collective member Murcof (a.k.a. Terrestre, Fernando Corona) takes minimal electronica to the conservatory. Murcof’s 2002 debut disc, *Martes*, earned kudos for its lithe assemblage of glitchy textures, surgical beats and lush, neo-classical timbres. The Mexican producer effectively made holy-minimalist composers like Górecki and Pärt do the clicks’n’cuts jitterbug. On *Remembranza*, Murcof engineers a painstakingly intricate mosaic of classical/chamber-orchestral atoms into somber, haunting compositions for 21st-century ears. His sporadic beats are generally muted and skittery, with gorgeously languorous piano motifs and pathos-laden strings. Observe a master at work. *Dave Segal*

NICOLAY
CITY LIGHTS: VOLUME 1.5

BBE/US/CD

After critical praise for the landmark file-swap creation Foreign Exchange, it was inevitable that Dutch musician/producer Nicolay would shop his beats Stateside. And what better way to do so than by serving up a batch as an official release. Intertwined with vocal drops, shout outs and cross fades, it plays more like a mixtape than a beat reel. Following a trend set by sound smiths like Pete Rock, J. Dilla, Wajeed and 9th Wonder, this instrumental crop of mellow, head-nodding tracks is just the kind of fix that aspiring MCs fiend for. *Rico “Superbizee” Washington*

TUJIKO NORIKO
BLURRED IN MY MIRROR

Room 40/AUS/CD

Tujiko Noriko has one of the most intriguingly inviting voices on the planet. Unintentionally adorable and profoundly sincere, Noriko’s voice may be the answer to all known atrocities. From beginning to end, *Blurred In My Mirror* goes above and beyond the experimental pop accessibility often grouped with the likes of Björk, baring the soul of an artist coming into her own. With intimate lyrics in both Japanese and English, these songs are universally appealing, regardless of gender or creed. Between the weaving of choppy vocal patterns with sporadic fits of fuzz, this discordant masterpiece may, quite possibly, save our souls. *Fred Miketa*

OMNI
BALLYHOO

Ariel/US/CD

On his latest full-length outing, the deep-voiced Omni maintains a good balance of street level sensibility, humor and introspection, like the hip-hop of his LA counterparts Freestyle Fellowship and the Living Legends. Thus, it’s only fitting that Omni enlists Mikah Nine of the Fellowship and Luckiyam.psc of the Legends to help keep the LA sound prevalent. While Omni’s blunted flows and his slow-rolling beats are consistent and familiar sounding, they rarely give lasting impressions like the tracks of his guests. Nonetheless, if you’re down with the LA underground, then *Ballyhoo* is worth a spin. *Max Herman*



JNEIRO JAREL

JNEIRO JAREL
THREE PIECE PUZZLE
Ropeadope/US/CD

Jarel’s jazz-imbued tracks make it clear that the Philly-based producer/MC has studied the great American songbook of Pete Rock and Jay Dee. Adding jazzy keys to a rugged bottom end, “Lock Down” finds Jarel reminiscing about the time when *Low-End Theory* was the joint; channeling Lonnie “Liston” Smith, he brings a blissful sound to “Sun Walkers.” Occasionally, he borrows too liberally from the J. Dilla playbook (“Do Yo Thang”). However, all the pieces coalesce on “The Big Bounce Theory Part II” (with Vinia Mojica), where Jarel carves his own identity by synthesizing a sophisticated fusion of rap and meditative soul. *James Mayo*



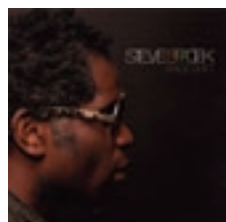
ONE SELF CHILDREN OF POSSIBILITY

Ninja Tune/UK/CD
They might look like diversity poster kids—Russian-born/British-raised DJ Vadim, Brazilian/Chilean (but Swedish-raised) vocalist Yarah Bravo and American rapper Blu Rum 13—but One Self delivers. Vadim brings his considerable skill, as on the solid instrumental “SD2,” which feels an atlas in a musical blender. Blu’s growled raps over the nervous strings of “Paranoid” convey the mood almost too well. But the standout is Yarah on “Over Expose,” a song about music-world hoochies—the sweetness of her voice contrasts beautifully with lyrics like “tits, ass, all over the TV screen.” *Children of Possibility* contains a subtle balance of thoughtfulness and playfulness. *Luciana Lopez*



P-LOVE ALL UP IN YOUR MIND

Bully/CAN/CD
Turntablist P-Love (Paolo Kapunan), a Montreal native who’s toured with Kid Koala, sets aside his quick draw on the decks on his debut full-length. Mixing elements of post-rock and downtempo, his production work takes center stage while the record needle barely draws blood. Warm, ethereal electronica washes over *All Up In Your Mind*—think Boards of Canada without the high-grade mushrooms. Somehow, P-Love has worked with the Ninja Tune Crew and lived cross-town from Kid Koala for years without falling into the exact same trip-hop trap. *Patrick Sisson*



MATTHEW HERBERT PLAT DU JOUR

Accidental/UK/CD
Matthew Herbert is an artist with an axe to grind—here he takes on the food industry. A sample from the liner notes for “Celebrity”: “*This track is made entirely from food endorsed by celebrities or tied in with a marketing strategy.*” In the case of that song—driven by the lilting, mischievous vocals of Herbert’s partner Dani Siciliano and a percolating pan-pipe melody—the rhetoric also rocks. But elsewhere the ideas and processes behind the music threaten to overwhelm the actual sounds. *Plat du Jour* is not easy to swallow, but that is precisely what makes it great. It would be easy to call the uneasy layer of politics that lurks behind the music the, ahem, icing on the cake. In reality, it’s Herbert’s willingness to ask questions, wave flags and actively choose how to live his life (and make music) that is the cake itself. *Peter Nicholson*

ROB SWIFT WAR GAMES

Coup De Grace/US/CD
At first glance, leaving behind the highly esteemed and major label-backed X-Ecutioners crew may seem like career suicide for a turntablist in 2005. But on *War Games*, Rob Swift goes solo and sounds as inspired as ever as he pulls no punches in reacting to injustice that occurs everywhere from NYC to Iraq. As he often includes vocal samples of George W. addressing the nation, this album is essentially Rob’s sonic response to the so-called War on Terror and he utilizes hard-hitting beats, ear-raising vocal samples and precise scratching to demonstrate that sometimes you can speak just as effectively with your hands. *Max Herman*

ALICE RUSSELL MY FAVOURITE LETTERS

Tru Thoughts/UK/CD
Beyond the digital funk, the dance-jazz sheen, the spacey Minnie Ripperton-isms, there’s something truly unique going on Alice Russell’s TM Juke-produced sophomore album. *My Favourite Letters* lives up to the rep Russell’s built on her own, and singing with the likes of Quantic. But it also boasts its own neo-psych-soul tip-offs: swirling artwork, trippy titles (“Munkaroo,” “Mirror Mirror On the Wolf”), Russell’s pipes are as achingly bold and naked as ever; Juke’s got all the muted trumpets, warped Afro basslines and Monk-ish chords to back up his subtly booming beats. Not the swaggering gestalt they’re headed towards, but closer than most will ever come. *Justin Hopper*

SONGS OF GREEN PHEASANT SONGS OF GREEN PHEASANT

Fat Cat/UK/CD
If the Mamas and the Papas were collectively incinerated in a fire at their peak and came back to haunt the living, their incarnation would be Duncan Sumpner’s Songs Of Green Pheasant. Recorded entirely on a four-track in his lonesome kitchen, this blend of psychedelic folk and ambient pop truly stands outside of the new folk forefront treasured by everyone from hippies to hip-hop heads alike. Duncan’s layered, dreary vocals resurrect feelings of aging and isolation without a trace of self-indulgence. Utilizing lo-fi drum machines, both electric and acoustic guitars and subtly driving basslines, modernity has never looked brighter. *Fred Miketa*

STEVE SPACEK SPACE SHIFT

Sound In Color/US/CD
The fusion of electronic and R&B has never been as popular as it should be (remember Atlantic’s unprofitable gamble on Craig David five years ago?). While today’s pop charts offer plenty of riff-driven, Neptunes-inspired fluff, Steve Spacek offers a smoother, more soulful version that channels a futuristic Al Green. It’s all sexy stuff, with softer trip-hop edges than Spacek’s eponymous London group a few years ago. Bouncy funk creeps through minimalist beats on “Slave,” conjuring visions of sashaying hips, but it’s Spacek’s falsetto croons and broken beats on “Rapid Rate” that could retrace the disjointed, stop-go paces of any urban romantic. *Janet Tzou*

TOM VEK WE HAVE SOUND

Universal/US/CD
We Americans had our chance at early ‘80s dance rock already and nobody (save maybe the DFA) came close to Talking Heads or Gang of Four. Now it’s Tom Vek’s turn, and the one-Englishman band supports his half-yelped deadpan vocals with a powerful, straight-ahead rhythmic bash. “If You Want” rocks snappy bass, cowbells, claps and metronomic guitars, while rusty drum machines and keyboard squawks supplement the twangy guitar lines of “That Can Be Arranged.” The obligatory disco-rock of “I Ain’t Saying My Goodbyes” works fine, and if Vek switches up his vocal style more, he should be one to watch. *Rob Geary*

WILLI WILLIAMS MESSENGER MAN

Blood and Fire/UK/CD
The name might not sound familiar but the hit does. Willi Williams’s 1979 smash “Armageddon Time” is a pivotal marker for late ‘70s reggae. He’s had nominal success since, but this collection proves his sincere and focused depth. “Messenger Man,” with its sly vocals coupled with searing guitars, and the skankin’ saxophone on “Give Jah Praise” give this minor deity proper placement in the pantheon of reggae kings. With the nonchalant rudeboy poetics of Kiddus I and Black Ark-quality production, Williams’s inner circle is one you won’t mind penetrating. *Derek Beres*

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ROBERT JAY

COMP REVIEWS

BACK TO BLACK
Lo Recordings/UK/CD

SEARCHING FOR SOUL: SOUL, FUNK & JAZZ RARITIES AND CLASSICS FROM MICHIGAN, 1968-1980
Luv N' Haight/US/CD

STAY ON THE GROOVE: 20 MODERN FUNK ANTHEMS
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CONCUSSIONS

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THREE COMPS PROVE THAT RETRO AND NEO-FUNK IS ALIVE AND KICKING.

More than the sum of its parts—political and sexual revolution, dancefloor catharsis—funk simply *was* America in the 1970s. But in the beginning, nobody knew that this furious beat and madman's howl would become the gold standard of modern music, the rhythm of the club and the street, of hip-hop, modern R&B and even rock and pop.

So it's no wonder that the music scene today revisits the lipstick traces of this hot-to-the-touch period—its records, grooves, art and language—and desperately wants to dig deeper. To do so, three new compilations hit three different sides of the new-funk scene so pervasive today in the Black Atlantic underground: *Back to Black's* revolutionary fist, *Searching for Soul's* crate-digging expedition into hidden regional treasures and *Stay on the Groove*, a blistering collection of modern devotees to "the one."

Back to Black is the soundtrack to a completed London exhibition of black revolutionary art from the '60s and '70s, and despite the fact that it's comprised of rare period tracks it still sounds freshly relevant. On "USA," poet David Lampel pronounces that "civilization is judged by the actions of those that proclaim it." Elsewhere, *Back to Black* proclaims away—from Mary Lou Williams' profound jazz-piano on "It Ain't Necessarily So" to Cymande's influential positive-funk groove "The Message" to political jabs such as Lloyd Williams' reggae number "Is It Because I'm Black" and Nikki Giovanni's politics-of-sex romp "Seduction/Kidnap Poem," this comp bears witness to a veiled history swiftly becoming legend.

But funk wasn't all raised fists. Funk is sex: raunchy and horny sex, groupie sex, making love and straight-up fucking. And *everyone* wanted part of that, from the local groove merchants to the Godfathers, as illustrated on *Searching for Soul*, one in an avalanche of recent well-produced comps highlighting '60s and '70s soul, funk and jazz records from locales across the United States. *SFS* makes the point expressly: even in a town as riddled with soul seekers as Detroit, there were enough solid grooves churned out that, 40 years later, new finds are still appearing. These include "Lets Get on Down" by The Black Aces of Soul and the Eyes of Ebony, a soaring slice of R&B harmonies and funky-drummer rhythms. Robert Jay's ode to the evils of liquor ("Alcohol") also goes down smoothly.

The children of the crates—a generation raised on hip-hop breakbeats—have now gone looking for the history of the "one." *Stay on the Groove* paints a rosy picture of the modern funk scene, with bands tapping into that rare-funk era when no one knew who'd become JB and who the Black Aces—from Britain's New Mastersounds' explosive opener to The Bamboos flutes and organs on "Tighten Up." In between, there are famous names—Quantic, Dap Kings—and lesser knowns like Sweden's excellent Jaguars. The brand new cuts stand up mightily next to the odd, newly reissued rarity (like Troubled Soul's "Funky Me") and one might think that the Earth is just as beautifully overpopulated with oversexed, over-sampled, revolutionary artists now as it was back in the days of *Back to Black* and *Searching for Soul*. Justin Hopper



DIALECT INTERSECTION

Dialect/FRA/CD

The house world of Dialect Recording's France is a feast right now, encompassing tech-house, post-disco, the remnants of electroclash, tweaked-out vocal cuts and seemingly anything else that falls in. All of this and more are represented on Dialect's first compilation, which relies mainly on homegrown artists like Simon Says, while branching out to include rising Euro house stars like Lindstrom and Riton. As compiled by label heads Cyril K and Simon, *Dialect Intersection* makes sense of this crossroads, shifting easily from The Quizz's Bugz-in-the-Attic-like jumper "Bag U Should" to Lindstrom's marching rave "Monsteer." Upbeat, dirty synthesizers that leap out from behind mashing, stomping beats are all over *Intersection*, making tracks like E-Troneek Funk and Chris Carrier's guitar-powered "Kalifornia" rock alone (while also begging for rowdy *schaffel* remixes). This intersection is a pileup of influences and sounds unified by their energy, danceability and refusal to recognize genre lines. *Rob Geary*



ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

Uncivilized World Entertainment/FRA/CD

Launched in France in 1998, Attac is an international activist movement "for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions." Their global-thinking, local-acting approach to mobilization extends to this hardcover booklet of songs and texts from around the world. Globalization is illustrated in its best possible light through Asian Dub Foundation's "Police on My Back," followed by Bosnian director Emir Kusturica's cover of The Clash's "Lost in the Supermarket," Femi Kuti's "I Wanna Be Free," Granddaddy's "Wives of Farmers" and on to Moby (ever the activist) with "Afterlife." Required readings include essays from culture-jammer Naomi Klein, linguist Noam Chomsky, Arundhati Roy and more. *Rachel Shimp*



CHLOÉ: I HATE DANCING

Human/FRA/CD

Parisian producer/DJ Chloé's pedigree is near perfect: affiliations with labels Gomma and Bpitch and releases on Karat and Crack and Speed. Clearly a woman well versed in irony, *I Hate Dancing* is an orgy of 4/4s and drunken dubby druggy disco with all the usual suspects: Kiki, Tiga, Munk, Superpitcher, DJ T. All quite safe and sound and *trés* lo-fi, the mix is given a distinctive edge over the competitors with the constant inclusion of each record's cracks, pops and hisses. Chloé: *I Hate Cleaning My Records*

Brion Paul

CHROMEO: UN JOLI MIX POUR TOI

Eskimo/BEL/CD

Proponents of anti-snob Jheri curl funk, NYC-by-way-of-Montreal duo Chromeo has partnered with Belgian label Eskimo Records (run by the equally anti-prankster Glimmers) to deliver *Un Joli Mix Pour Toi*, celebrating the rough-around-the-edges but interiorly hypersensitive electro-boogie fan in all of us. Vintage *Solid Gold* funk and diffused disco meets springy lover's lockin' and rockin' from Jellybean, Robert Palmer, Herbie Hancock, Modern Romance, The Jets, Sharon Redd and Warp 9, all glistening for androids ready to bump nasties. If slick, get-down grooves are your thing you can jam on it to the unwavering huddle 'n' hustle of this '80s prom-ready mix. *Tony Ware*

DJ KENTARO: SOLID STEEL

Ninja Tune/UK/CD + DVD

Who better to serve up a collection of fine Ninja Tune back-catalog items than the highest-scoring DMC champ ever? Japan's Kentaro goes to work on the classics with surgical precision, transplanting hyperactivated jazz 'n' bass grooves into dirty trip-hop funk and back again. Threaded together with old-school party mixtape energy, Jaga Jazzist, Coldcut and Funki Porcini interface with The Herbaliser, Animals on Wheels and Wagon Christ in a smooth, inventive and lightning-wristed style that still puts the music ahead of the technique. And the visu-scratched crash-test dummies on the accompanying DVD are pretty damn entertaining as well. *Doug Morton*

DRUM & BASS ESSENTIALS: MIXED BY DJ HYPE

Warner Dance/UK/CD

Shotter, hitter, serial killer! There couldn't be a more definitive opener for this three-disc set of hardstep monsters than Pendulum & Fresh's "Tarantula," where Spyda and Tenor Fly promise to visit the grave they put you in—if only to kick dirt on it, hug your mama and hit on your sister. Similar aggression from Diliinja, Total Science and Shy FX jabs at skanky vibes from Top Cat's "Original Ses (Police in Helicopter)" to the Logistics remix of Leviticus' "Big, Bad & Heavy." One gripe: Hype's turntablism and ID'ing ruins out-of-place cuts like Cyantific's "Don't Follow," which probably sound less ridiculous on the dance-floor at his Fabric residency than they do on this piece of plastic. *Rachel Shimp*

FREEFORM FIVE: STRANGEST THINGS

Fine/UK/CD

The signature sounds of England's Freeform Five are reminiscent of the likes of Prince and Parliament/Funkadelic, and those influences are quite evident on *Strangest Things*. But unlike the aforementioned, the enduring qualities that made P-Funk withstand time don't exist here—the charm of Freeform Five's pop sensibilities lasts for a minute, only to evaporate with repeated listening. The batch of choice remixes on the second CD makes up somewhat for the disappointment, as slamming versions by the likes of Mylo, Tiefschwarz and M.A.N.D.Y. are actually marked improvements on the originals. Adventurous music lovers beware. *Velanche*

FROM MONUMENT TO MASSES: SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT CONTEND

Dim Mak/US/CD

Post-rock has long been criticized for a certain intellectual firmness. Yet what differentiates the great bands is the ability to balance the right and left lobes, thus yielding head-nodding tunes with thought provoking results. Like former Merck stars Tiki Obmar or Brooklyn's Turing Machine, the Bay area trio From Monument to Masses has achieved this equilibrium with a sturdy mix of elaborate instrumentation and politically-inspired samples. *Schools of Thought Contend* offers two new tracks but more importantly includes 13 remixes more varied than a post-graduate curriculum. From Thunderbirds Are Now!'s restrained redux of "The Quiet Before" to the frenetic breakbeat treatment of "Old Robes" by Antimc, *Schools of Thought Contend* proves that for all of post-rock's supposed inflexibility a lot can be shaped from its parts. *Steve Marchese*

GR LZ: WOMEN AHEAD OF THEIR TIME

Crippled Dick Hot Wax/GER/CD

GR LZ captures that brief phase in the late '70s/early '80s when femme-voiced post-punk boasted some of the most intriguing sounds extant. This collection excavates a fortuitous mix of rarities from unknowns like Dorothy, Jajaja and Nicolle Meyer and highlights from slightly better known acts like The Slits, Bow Wow Wow, Rip, Rig And Panic (featuring Neneh Cherry), Delta 5 and New Age Steppers. Funk and dub are the main default modes here, with transporting basslines and distinctive vocal phrasing aplenty. *GR LZ* is both an invigorating memento and a relevant inspiration to a new generation of adventurous musicians of both genders. *Dave Segal*

I LIKE IT VOL. 2

Compost/GER/CD

Like a variety snack-pack version of DMC's *Back To Mine* series, *I Like It* returns for round two of its celebrity-hosted listening party, this time with Trevor Jackson, Pole, Richard Dorfmeister and Trickski doing the selecting. While it's nice to read track-by-track narratives by these accomplished artists, this "personal collection" intended intimacy competes with a rather disjointed sequence of unsung after-hours classics, with the beautiful (Colourbox's rendition of Augustus Pablo's "Baby I Love You So") offset by the ridiculous (David Thomas' "Monster Magee, King of the Seas"). Kudos, however, on the explosively excessive packaging. *Doug Morton*

IMPULSIVE!

IMPULSIVE UNMIXED

Verve/US/CD

Jut when you thought the remix/reissue thing was done, along comes another new/old catalog showcase to flip your wig and make you re-evaluate your stance. It's still true, as George Russell hurriedly mentions in the early-rap-prototype-scot-jam "A Helluva Town," that New York is "what they call a something else town," though, obviously, a lot has changed since Impulse artists like Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus, Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, and Yusuf Lateef first laid it down. Still, their lasting contributions are apparent from the *Unmixed* disc—a musical education in and of itself. Reimagined and reconfigured, the remixes swing with the same out-there vibe that made Impulse a formidable jazz factory, and while it's debatable whether the originals can even be improved upon, you can easily imagine Mingus tipping his porkpie hat to The RZA, Shepp passing the baton to Chief Xcel, or Gabor Szabo giving Prefuse 73 the thumbs-up. *Eric K. Arnold*

LATE NIGHT WITH ANDY CALDWELL

LATE NIGHT WITH KING BRITT

Swank/US/CD

Lifting the *Late Night* series off the launchpad of Vegas-based Swank are two heavy-hitting vets of the house music scene. Om's Caldwell takes a cosmic sound journey into the wee hours with a style that's neither too harsh nor too tepid. King Britt's version is afterhours bliss, with the warm textures of melody and soul that separate him from many of his contemporaries. Complete with cool artwork and nice packaging, the *Late Night* series should keep listeners and dancers airborne long after the music sails through the other end of the galaxy. *Velanche*

LUST: JENNIFER CARDINI

Human/FRA/CD

At first listen, Jennifer Cardini's latest mix might come across as a bit dry, but beneath its cool exterior is a depth of hypnotic groove that will bring you back again and again. Opening and closing with material from Claro Intellecto, the body of the mix is a calmly prowling electronic blend spanning from Disko B to Mood Music. The off-kilter vocals of Illektric's "Paranoia" and the Wighnomy Brothers' remix of Slam "This World" are tempered by the arid minimal enchantment of tracks by DJ Koze, Lopazz and Berlin's faceless Sleep Archive series. Two hits of *Lust* and you're hooked. *Doug Morton*

NIK WESTON NU [NEW] STYLE VOL. 3

Nuro/JPN/CD

Nik Weston turns away from the land of the rising sun for this selection of global goodies on the laid-back tip. Leeds, UK's The New Mastersounds sets the mood, with organic organ swells and gently jazzy guitar making a nice nest for Corinne Bailey Rae's soulful croon. There's some tasty snare work on Rob Scott's "Fallin,'" but some tracks, like Ernesto's "Blame It on Your Melody," are just a bit too smooth. Still, this is a solid comp for an easy evening on the chaise lounge. *Peter Nicholson*

PLANET DELSIN: INTERSTELLAR SOUNDS OF STARDUST

Delsin/NETH/CD

Delsin celebrates a half-century of near faultless releases and simultaneously demonstrates the positive side of peer pressure—none of the 12 artists contributing an exclusive track here much fancied being class clown, it seems. Each of these tracks could have easily held its own on a 12", but the contributions from Shed, \$tinkworx, Yoav B, Newworldaquarium and label boss Peel Seamus are, fittingly, out of this world. Life begins at 50. *Dave Stenton*

SOULSEARCHING: THE COMPOST RADIO SHOW

Compost/GER/CD

Michael Rütten's radio show is one of the few I can be bothered to track down on the internet and this volume easily explains why it's worth the search. Rütten's not

afraid to switch up tempos—Pascal Rioux and Mr. Day's dreamy house number "Don't Outstay Outside Tonight" is sandwiched between two decidedly downtempo cuts, for instance; his selections are complimentary rather than homogenous. With songs as disparate as 2 Banks of 4's chopped and squelched remix of Build an Ark's "You Gotta Have Freedom" and Benny Sings' "Make A Rainbow," with its bare piano plus chorus, this mix is more about collaboration than cohesion. *Peter Nicholson*



THE SOUND OF YOUNG NEW YORK & TORONTO

Plant Music/US/CD

The premise of this series is to highlight the apparent strength and depth of New York (and now Toronto's) more danceable indie rock acts. I say apparent because if you substituted Berlin for New York and London for Toronto, few people would know any different. The bands in question have a habit of looking. And sounding. Exactly. The same. After eight identikit tracks things do eventually get interesting. The Glass's "Fourteen Again" demonstrates less is more where guitars and grooves are concerned. Neurotic Drum Band's playful pastiche on early electro, "We're Gonna Rock New York," also undoes some damage. But it's too little, too late. *Dave Stenton*



STYLES UPON STYLES: A COLLECTION OF NEW ZEALAND URBAN SOUL

Sugarlicks/NZ/CD

Known more for Frodo and Orks than music, this New Zealand label is putting Pacific soul on the map. This 12-track compilation features an incredible range of R&B/reggae-influenced artists, including Nat Rose and his sensually silken "Soul 2 Soul" and Jah'Licious's midtempo groove "Jammin' to Music." One Million Dollars's unique take on the melody of Faith No More's "Edge of the World" is only one way these islanders pull from Western soul. The influence is apparent throughout—the slower electronic rhythms have Giant



THE EDGE: DAVID AXELROD AT CAPITOL RECORDS 1966-1970

MIZELL: THE MIZELL BROTHERS AT BLUE NOTE RECORDS 1972-1976 & BEYOND
EMI-Blue Note/US/CD

If actions truly speak louder than words, the sheer volume of modern tracks sampling both David Axelrod and The Mizell Brothers is enough to verify the immeasurable legacies of these classic producers. Their list of devotees reads like a time capsule of the era's most respected crate diggers: DJ Shadow, The Neptunes, Dr. Dre, Madlib, Jay Dee, DJ Spinna and many more. While both Axelrod and The Mizells worked with an amazing and diverse roster of jazz, soul and pop legends—from Cannonball Adderley to The Jackson 5—they were both able to forge distinctive musical signatures that have since informed an entire generation of artists. This pair of expertly curated compilations from two of America's most venerated jazz imprints is not only a perfect introduction to an often intimidating body of work, but—more importantly—it allows us to compare today's seminal recordings against these time-tested, finely-aged classics of nearly 40 years ago. *Steve Marchese*



HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS: EAST COAST BOOGIEMEN

If you've been out clubbing in the last eight years and shaking your limbs to damn good house music, chances are you've submitted yourself to the sounds of Washington DC's East Coast Boogiemens (a.k.a. ECB). Members Ken Christensen and Juan Zapata are black belts in dance music kung fu. They've produced smokin' hot wax for labels such as Aroma (Belgium), Robsoul (France), Peaches (Chicago), Oomph (Toronto), Far East (Korea), Amenti (San Fran) and their label in DC, Odds and Ends Music, to name a few. Their sound usually involves a chunky mid-tempo beat, clever sample selection, smooth jazz influences, top-shelf tribal instrumentation, occasional but seductive vocal femininity—and filet mignon-quality funky programming. Don't sleep on their recent release, "Pictures of You," on Black Cherry Records. Here's what's making them boogie. *Speed Demon*

OLIVIER DEMIT 1 + 1 Amenti/US/2x12

Olivier Demit has really come out of his shell as an influential producer this past year. These tracks are full of body tingling pads that put the moodiness back into house music—the kinds of tracks that make you stomp and scream when you understand the intelligence behind them. "1 + 1" is extremely well rounded, with funk, disco and jazz influences. *Ken ECB*

CHICAGOAN CHICAGOAN Herbal Essence/US/12

The chorus in this track is Chicagoan's voice, but the lyrics have everything to do with the song's feeling. Why? Because you can't tell what the hell he is saying. Slurred vocals progress over a thick groove. A nice break hits and then, out of nowhere, a '70s disco Latin mumble-rumble of a good time drops and throws the dancefloor into a frenzy. *Ken ECB*

MILES MAEDA HOLLA BACK BOY Dust Traxx/US/12

Miles has to be one of my favorite DJs and producers because he exudes his own style and his music is never the same. This single is no exception, with disco grooves, jacking percussion, deep Detroit analog basslines and melodic synth patterns. Play it back a couple of times to catch what is going on underneath. Hidden micro sounds create a collage from this master painter. *Ken ECB*

JAZZY EYEWEAR

TOP DRAW EP

Uma/US/12

DOIN' WRONG

Nordic Trax/CAN/12

If I happen to meet Fabian Giannattasio (a.k.a. DJ Mood and Jazzy Eyewear) and his glasses aren't totally stylish, I'll be disappointed. Which is never how I feel about his music, and both of these singles are no exception. "Top Draw" contains three perfectly constructed house tracks ("Possibility" is one of my fave tracks this year) packed with filtered synths, bubbling bass notes and thoughtful melodic arrangements. "Doin' Wrong" is super spacious, letting the minimal bass and tracky drums do all the talking. *Tomas Palermo*

DE'LACY FUNKY WITH ME

Easy Street/US/12

Easy Street produces "big room" garage tracks that even underground DJs can play. Take De'Lacy's shimmering vocal outing for example: sure it's got some cliché vocoded treatments and other Stardust-isms, but the heart of this feel-good disco track is soon revealed. And if you're looking for a subtler treatment, the NY Lounge mix is all atmospheric chords and dreamy Rhodes. *Hector Cedillo*

BIOGROUND OUTSTANDING EMPTINESS

THE TIMEWRITER LOVE IS BEAUTIFUL

Plastic City/GER/12

Plastic City continues to walk the fine line between deep and tech-house, but the results are usually pleasing. That's the feeling I have about Bioground's tribal (upfront congas dominate the mix) tune "Outstanding Emptiness." It has plenty of spacey synths and forlorn vocal laments—nice for late night sets. "Drunken Sunsets" is a lighter, jazzier affair. The Timewriter's "Love..." is a generic peak-hour track for

trance-influenced crowds, but "Night Over Sundbyber" is pure ambient house bliss. *Warren Lewis*

TIBURON SHAKE ME

Coma/US/12

Lance "Landshark" DeSardi fires up his darkest New Wave electro-house synths for this Cabaret Voltaire/Nitzer Ebb-style track. If you caught his sterling "Slippage" single on Coco Machete, you'll recognize the deadpan vocals and the gloomy, Bauhausian cacophony. Appealing to everyone's inner lust and anger, "Shake Me," should be a breakout track for the Shark. *Hector Cedillo*

DAVID MURRAY GWOTET OSUNLADE MIXES

3D Family/FRA/12

Already a staple in the sets of Louie Vega and Ron Trent, Osunlade scores a major hit with his superb remix of NY free-jazz legend David Murray. The veteran saxophone master—whose catalog includes dozens of albums on Black Saint, HatArt and other labels—gets a reverent Afrohouse treatment. Both the Osunlade Yoruba Soul house mix and Alex Zul's Lagos Nigeria rub highlight a master in his prime with chant vocals, Murray's sax artistry and the remixers' programming talents in perfect harmony. An immensely important single. *Derek Grey*

DJ YOAV B. POWERHOUSE EP

Wabi Sabi/NETH/12

On this EP, Israel's Yoav B. provides us with three funky cuts of burly house that will surely get the attention of those who like theirs a little tougher. If slow-burning, whooshy techno is your game then head straight to "Energize," as its freakish atmospherics ease you in before unleashing the technoid-grooving beast inside. Side B takes things a little deeper with thick analog bass and an intense classic jack groove. *TK*

DJ PIERRE COME TOGETHER (WHAT IS HOUSE?)

King Street/US/12

Pierre's single "Come Together" is expressively built, and your dancefloor will love you for playing it. Laced with familiar drum rhythms, this release redefines the idea of six degrees of separation. United under one groove, fans of artists such as DJ/producer Stacey Pullen or Doc Martin will enjoy this one. *Scott Edmonds*

STRANGER PHYSICAL

Stranger Music/US/12

If Chicken Lips and Daniel Wang had a love child it would sound something like this. Once again, Mr. Cook does no *rong* (pun intended) as he continues to develop his solo efforts. Flip it over and you've got "Darker Day," an odd mix of broken house full of squishy synths, noisy (really noisy) hi-hats and chopped-up percussion. Lastly comes "Car Beat." Yep, that's what it is, a car horn...and a beat. *TK*

TIGER STRIPES SPRITED AWAY

Nite Grooves/US/12

Ever experimenting with the idea of "cold fusion," Stockholm-based Mikael Nordgren (under his Tiger Stripes moniker) creates another dance-floor sensation. Blending swirling synths, strings and strong beats, the EP comes off stylistically similar to releases from Dennis Ferrer and Jerome Sydenham. Fans of Ibadan Records, Code Red or Defected should scope this out. *Scott Edmonds*



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TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: PETER GRUMMICH

It's time for America to know consummate German techno DJ and producer Peter Grummich. With 20 years DJ experience, releases on Kompakt, Shitkatapult, Auftrieb and Spectral, plus remixes for Meteosound, Electric Avenue and Gold & Liebe, the man's got more music to his name than strands of hair on his glistening pate. That's a good thing for fans of dirty minimal techno, a sound he systematically molests on his debut Shitkatapult album *Switch Off The Soap Opera*. What Grummich has against *Days Of Our Lives* is anyone's guess, but his music is all for grinding synth riffs over subtle, pounding kicks on tracks like "Motorized" (Kompakt), or gut-shaking rumbles with digitized Ritalin percussion on "Jackmaster" (Spectral). It's Grummich's guttural bass notes that define his hypnotic tracks—compositions that also encompass elements of Germany's entire techno history—from Kraftwerk to Hardfloor and Basic Channel. Grummich flips the channel for us with these hot vinyl picks. *Derek Grey* www.shitkatapult.com

S-MAX WAKE UP TO SPW-LIKE PERFECTION EP Boogizm/GER/12

S-max plays around with a Lady Sovereign-type vocal sample, which comes off really soulfully! The tracks are relaxed and housey but at the same time melodic in a trippy way. *Peter Grummich*

CHARLIE NOTFONK FONK STAKES Saasfee/GER/12

Four tracks ranging between cut-up madness and shuffled sawtooth funk. The tracks rumble along funny and floundering without ever getting foolish or silly; over and over little melodies and samples show up to save the listener from getting bored. It reminds me strongly of old Auftrieb records. *Peter Grummich*

KERRI CHANDLER BAR A THYM Nitegrooves/US12

This is one of the records of the year for me. The way Kerri Chandler EQs the kick drum and puts the bassline on top is just state of the art! His keyboard licks on this piece are unmistakable. This record hits everybody, and is much more than mere techno or house! *Peter Grummich*

HEARTTHROB TIME FOR ENSOR

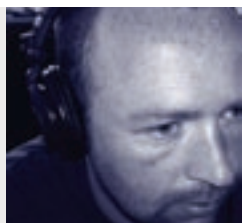
Minus/US/12" Having gained our attention with his debut appearance on the recent *Minimize to Maximize* compilation, Brooklyn's Jesse Siminski drops his first single for the Minus label. He advances his polished black-chrome techno sound with a balance of eerie, cortex-resonating synth work and granular sub-textures; the tight, minimal 4/4 pumpery and nano-botic percussion snaps it all together. Solid stuff. *Doug Morton*

SANS SOLEIL THE DOMINICAL EP

Wave/US/12 Reorienting your mind with his late-20th century discop influences, Sans Soleil's (a.k.a. Michael Trommer from Toronto) productions are subtly constructed and emotive. With vocal help from singer-songwriter Genevieve Marentette, Trommer's "Orange-Grey" and "Somnambule" are reminiscent of Carl Craig and vocalist Sarah Gregory's take on the classic "As Time Goes By." Fans of Derrick May's Transmat label and Craig's Planet-E label will dig this. *Scott Edmonds*

AROY DEE/VINCE WATSON SHIFTS/THE PLANETS

MOS/NETH/12 Vince Watson's remix of "The Planets" is a mélange of delicate, yet forceful driving melodic components, however sparse and minimal the array. Aroy Dee's "Shifts" is the musical equivalent of an early morning cup of organic tea—comforting, warm and perfect for the moment. *Scott Edmonds*



DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: SEAN O'KEEFE

It's one thing to be a drum & bass artist with a 15-year career and steady productivity, quite another to be the artist for whom the term "jungle" was coined. But that's the lot of Sean O'Keefe (a.k.a. Deep Blue) whose single ("2 Bad Mice"/"No Respect") with Simon Colebrooke (engineered by Moving Shadow's Rob Playford) as 2 Bad Mice had London dance music DJs describing it as "jungle techno." The name stuck, and 2 Bad's early '90s releases such as "Hold It Down" and the anthemic "Bomb Scare" are being slammed to this day. O'Keefe has recorded under the aliases Kaotic Chemistry and Deep Blue—the latter moniker has become a staple in the atmospheric drum & bass scene. Find O'Keefe's previous output on labels like Moving Shadow, Partisan, Good Looking, Twisted Funk and Brooklyn's Offshore, who recently issued his "Soho Code" remix EP. O'Keefe's new album, *Metropolitan Chic*, is out now on his own Scale imprint. Here are some of the jungle man's top tunes now. *Derek Grey* www.scalerecords.com

BIG BUD SOURCE OF INSPIRATION Paradox Music/UK/12

Ever wished that you had a time machine? Well, this release on Paradox's splendid label is the next best thing. Anyone that ever visited Speed (legendary London club night) will think they're back in 1995. Classic beats, warm bass and twinkling melodies. Ah, the good old days. *Sean O'Keefe*

KLUTE & PIETER K MATERIAL TRIP Commercial Suicide-Offshore/UK/12

Top quality split 12", giving you three artists for the price of one. "Material Trip" has relentless ride-driven drums and thumping sub bass layered with choral chants and arabesque horns, while "Ago" is a crisp, technical drum workout with pulsing analog bass. *Sean O'Keefe*

SEBA & PARADOX FEAT. ROBERT MANOS WAKE UP CALL Secret Operations/UK/12

Another cracker from the duo that can do no wrong at the moment. The usual tight breaks, this time fused with melancholy pads, chest-crushing bass and Robert Manos' haunting vocal—seriously deep! *Sean O'Keefe*

D KAY & DJ LEE WAX'D

Metalheadz/UK/12 These two experienced producer/DJs know that the dancefloor needs uplifting and melodic tunes that are also tough and relentless. "Wax'd" strikes this balance with a combination of conga-laden, reverb-saturated drums, squelchy basslines and nuff glittering synth leads and pads. It's like a cliff dive into pristine blue Caribbean waters—exhilarating! Likewise, the flip's amen-constructed "Eternal Sunset" will please the atmo-heads—GLR and Metalheadz fans alike. *Chopper*

FRACTURE & NEPTUNE BLESS ME RANDOM MOVEMENT STARS IN THE DARK Bassbin/UK/12

Bassbin releases always combine the perfect ingredients of rolling breaks, delicious dub samples and contagious grooves. Fracture & Neptune's "Bless Me" is one of the finer dubwise tunes to come out of this oversaturated style, while the b-side "Firefly" coasts over droning bass and sharp break edits. Random Movement's "Stars in the Dark" will uplift even the most stubborn techhead to brockout, and the flipside "Struggle to the Grave" is an equally runnin' affair. *Ryan Romana*

TC1 & STRESS LEVEL SATISFY (REMIX) Critical/UK/12

TC1 & Stress Level redesign Chris SU's soulful amen smasher "Satisfy" into a more melodic wavy roller, while keeping all the vocal and techy highlights intact. The flip, "Sonar Heat," comes on even stronger with its Artificial Intelligence-inspired bassline, wispy vocals and chunky layers of beats. Fans of Hospital and Liquid V will not be disappointed. *Ryan Romana*

VERSE/D-BRIDGE SOLITUDE'S WEAKNESS

Crunch/UK/12 Drum & bass is definitely on a Saturn's return back to its tune-based musical roots. "Solitude's Weakness" is further proof, coming in like early Adam F, J Majik, Carlito or Intense. The straightforward mix of rolling drums, soulful vocal snippets, filtered bass and sensuous pads are smoother than a Lamborghini ride on the Autobahn. *Tomas*

ASC FEATURING INTEX SYSTEMS DRUM TRACK 3 (HEATSINK) Offshore/US/12

More Offshore originality stems from ASC featuring himself under his Intex Systems guise. "Drum Track 3" switches back and forth from motorized jerky rhythms to smoother stripped away atmospherics, while maintaining a cohesive sci-fi vibe. "Fresh" flexes over crafty beat arrangements and pulsing electro bass bounces topped with lush pads and sporadic b-boy samples. *Ryan Romana*

GENERATION DUB WARP SPEED EP

Ganja/UK/2x12 Drum & bass continues to morph and chart a dark, sci-fi cinematic vision of the future. G-Dub's double 12 is no exception. On DJ Hype's reformed Ganja imprint, G-Dub follows in the label's tradition of smashing, bouncy, drum-roll punctuated tracks, "Warp Speed" and the b-boy/cop-chase opus "Tink Ya Bad" are the standouts. *Chopper*



Forthcoming artists in the series: Carl Craig, High Contrast, Stanton Warriors, Tiefschwarz, Ricardo Villalobos, Plump DJs. Available on compact disc from all good stores or for £6 by subscribing to the series via the fabric website: www.fabriclondon.com

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HIP-HOP LABEL PROFILE: UP ABOVE

LA's Up Above Records has carved a firm niche in the American independent hip-hop scene. You get the feeling that they're poised for a huge release, like punk label Epitaph had with NOFX. Founder DJ Key Kool breaks down their history in his own words: "I was asked to be a DJ in a group (where I met fellow Visionaries member LMNO) managed by Ice T's Rhyme Syndicate in 1989, and that was my introduction into the music industry. Around that time, I met Doug 'Papadoug' Kato who ran into an old friend of his, DJ Rhettmatic (of the Beat Junkies), and we began demo-ing out some songs.

"The three of us—Doug, Rhettmatic and I—decided to release our record on our own. Now, Doug handles the financial end of Up Above, I run things with label manager Jonny Park; DJ Rhettmatic consults us on projects.

"Our agenda first was to release our own records. It started with the Key-Kool & Rhettmatic *Kozmonautz* album in 1995, and from that point we focused on Visionaries as a group or members, whether it be me and Rhett, LMNO, or 2Mex of SonGodSuns. We're excited about our first full-length releases from East Coast artists: the multi-talented Kev Brown's *I Do What I Do*, and the world-renowned Supernatural's *S.P.I.T.*

"The hardest part of building the label over these 10 years has been having the patience to see something organic grow slowly. When you're an indie, every penny counts and is re-invested into the next project; it's basically like treading water, and if you don't drown, that's a form of success.

"We're now distributing the entire Jurassic 5 vinyl catalog worldwide as well as Legendary Music (the Living Legends label) and DJ Muggs' (Cypress Hill) Angeles Records. "Visionaries were inducted into the Universal Zulu Nation this year and we are humbled and truly honored.

"In the spring we have some big releases: the Visionaries' fourth album, a Jurassic 5 anniversary edition album, which will be the original J5 EP with bonus tracks that have never been offered on CD before (like "Unified Rebelloution" and "Verbal Gunfight") and an album by Ikey Owens of Mars Volta and 2Mex of SonGodSuns/Visionaries called *The Look Daggers*." *Tomas Palermo*
www.upabove.com



BREAKS GUEST REVIEWS: OLLYWOOD

UK producer/DJ Ollywood's label, Hardcore Beats, is a way of life. He describes his mission as "doing what we love and not having to take crap from morons." Pioneering a tear-out-style of breakbeat music (typified by drum & bass-style aggro energy and distorted bass), Ollie began his career in 2001, releasing singles under the Pipe & Slippers moniker. "Deekline was supporting those singles and we became friends," Ollie explains. "We've since split, and I merged Hardcore Beats with Ed209's Wireframe Records." Ollie and Ed handle all label roles: press, studio, A&R and accounts. Ollie currently rates artists like Stanton Warriors, Deekline & Wizard, DJ Mutiny, The Autobots and Baobinga & I.D. "Upcoming-wise, Sensi Allstars and Control Z are getting a lot of interest. And Screwface is about to release its debut on Hardcore Beats," he says. On Fridays, Ollywood lurks at John Carter's tavern in Camden Lock sucking down Stellas before rushing off to Marathon Bar for a late-night kebab. Beforehand, we corralled him for his top tracks. *Tomas Palermo*
www.hardcorebeats.co.uk

VINYL JUNKIE WE'RE NOT DEAD (30HZ REMIX) Warehouse Wax/UK/12

Vinyl Junkie—the Bristolian hardcore stalwart—commissions another thrilling tear-out remix from 30Hz, who turns in his best performance to date. Dark and funky rolling percussion and eerie Juno strings lead to a stereoscopic, morphing dream of a b-line. It's the movement in the bass that smacks it, sending your legs one way and your torso the other. Brilliant. *Ollywood*

DEEP IMPACT & THE AUTOBOTS ULTRA-FUNKULA Broke/UK/12

I'm sitting here with Tom Autobot and he's passed me this to review and said, "It's probably the funkiest thing we've ever done, and that's why we put the hardest motherfucking tune on the flip!" And in that precise comment, Tom has summed up the wonderful Venn diagram that is the breakbeat universe. *Ollywood*

CUT & RUN MURDER IN THE JAMROCK Cut & Run/UK/12

Cut & Run continues to unleash the biggest booties around, always managing to find a fresh, well-produced take on the Jr. Gong original. This one's got all the major faces skanking in ecstasy... and the sub is one big, dirty beast of a bastard. *Ollywood*

SAME PEOPLE DANGEROUS

Mask/UK/12
I personally reworded "Dangerous—Mask Mix" about eight times on my decks the first time I heard it, so heavy were its throbbing subs, swinging snares and hi-hats. Although this is a dark stepper, its energy is infectious and party-friendly. Four-four massive grab this up. *Chopper*

FREELAND FEAT. JUICE ALEEM & TOASTIE TAYLOR HEEL & TOE

Marine Parade/UK/12
Daniel Taylor's remix of Adam Freeland's latest single goes against the current breaks trend of overdriven and monstrous productions—thank fuck! In fact, it cleverly slides back and forth between funky drums and fat, stylish electro-house rhythms. Evil Nine's rework is a funk-fueled roller that builds into a guitar frenzy. Freeland's own psychodub rerub is potent gear too. Big fun! *Derek Grey*

ODISSI GROUPIE

Cyberfunk/UK/12
"Hate you big star/just wanna be seen with you," deadpans a female voice over a punchy drum kit and stabbing, low-end bass on the Original Mix of "Groupie," which seems to be the winner here due to its dramatic break-downs, sample trickery and cohesive arrangement. Vandal's remix, on the other, hand is a random collection of computer noises, squiggles and synth ephemera—it's hooky, but nothing to really grab onto. The Original Mix mix works 'cause it's consistent. *Derek Grey*

RAG & BONE FULL TILT

Rag & Bone/UK/12
I flagged this gem down via Black Market records in London. It's tribal dubstep with the flavor of Horsepower's best tracks. Vibe to the stuttering beats, punctuated by all manner of hunted tropical forest sounds, chanting and rubber-dub basslines on "Full Tilt." Flip for "Grenade," which is a stabby, old school sample fest with an enormous analog bass lead—a proper 2 a.m. track. *Tomas Palermo*

SCUBA TIMBA

Hotflush/UK/12
The closest comparison I can think of for this techno-phononic, minimalist bass-driven garage is German label Basic Channel—each percussive element is precise, delicate and implies dread. With a vaguely ragga dancehall kick pattern (but at garage speed), glistening ice-blue keyboard riffs and snares that sound like metal doors slamming in an institution hallway, "Sleepa" slithers rapidly into the darkness. "Timber" is an equally sub-happy track with an 8-bar riddim and wraith-like strings. Moody blues! *Chopper*

COLOSSUS THE TRIBUTE

OmHipHop/US/12
Charlie Tate is a man with a funk pedigree, including stints in Big Cheese Allstars and his King Kooba project. "The Tribute" invokes his past and present influences, with MC Capitol A dip-diving over chopped big-band jazz beats. If that's not enough, DJ Zeph hauls out a mean Brazilian-dub remix—organ stabs, conga rolls and classic breaks galore. UK guest Hylton Smith (Roots Manuva) rocks "Thripney Bits" and J-Boogie's Afrobeat breakers mix pushes the genre boundaries out there. *Tomas Palermo*

or Blackalicious. Shit is mad funky. Given time and exposure, these guys could make serious international waves. *Tomas*

LIGHTHEADED TIMELESS

Tres/US/12
Watch out for the *new* New School. Groups like Lightheaded are schooled in hip-hop history from Furious Five through Tribe to Jurassic 5, and they fuse all these eras into a tight rocksteady continuum. This art is about poetic delivery, which Lightheaded have in spades—different tones, flows and stanza arrangement, matched with funky beats from Ohmega Watts. Resistance is futile. *Barry Gee*

SLUM VILLAGE MY LIFE

Barak/US/12
SV have always recognized the hard Detroit blocks they hail from, a world they describe in Panoramavision on "Ghetto Movie." It's a close-to-the-edge world where the weak get fed to the sharks, criminals and cops play out drama in the streets. "EZ-Up" is Slum's other face—thug lovers that hang "shortie in the club" flirtations on hooky R&B chorus-addled instrumentals. One foot in the mainstream, one in the underground is how it's done nowadays. *Phil Phloe*

PERCEE P PUT IT ON THE LINE

Stones Throw/US/12
Already known as an MC on par with Rakim, KRS-One and other NYC greats, P has laid low and always been just about *ta* blow. '06 might be the year it happens with this leadoff single from a forthcoming album to whet our appetites. Produced by Madlib Invazion, the original soul-dunked mix comes off like a gritty RZA joint with Percee's hyperkinetic AK-47 lyric fire. He hits the bulls eye with ease. *Phil Phloe*

ANONYMOUS TWIST ROYAL FLUSH

Soul On Rice/CAN/12
Rap from Canada can be a mixed bag. The brothers up north are true believers, no doubt, but sometimes this leads to overly uptight, detailed rhyming and production. Not the case here, jack! Over a beat that sounds like The Meters or The MGs circa '74, AT flows like Beatnuts, Show & AG



FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: JAZZANOVA

The six-man Jazzanova DJ and production team have rarely been out of the spotlight since their 1997 release “**Fedime’s Flight**” dropped on Compost’s JCR imprint. The crew of Alexander Barck, Claas Brieler, Jürgen von Knoblauch, Roskow Kretschmann and Extended Spirit (Axel Reinemer and Stefan Leisering) came together at the Dangerous Doughnuts jazz club sessions in Berlin. At the club, jazz and funk rarities were the order of the day, a style the crew recently revisited on the *Blue Note Trip Jazzanova* compilation. Two albums, ‘03’s *Remixed* and ‘02’s *In Between*, showcase the team’s vibrant take on electronic music, with influences from broken beat (a genre they helped define), Brazilian jazz and, more recently, melodic techno. With a cracking mix of Marcos Valle currently bangin’ in the clubs, we asked von Knoblauch to lace us with what’s hot in his crates. *Derek Grey* www.sonarkollektiv.com

CHICO HAMILTON EL TORO (MARC DE CLIVE LOWE REMIX) Impulse/US/CD This remix again shows Marc’s great remixing skills. The essence of the [Chico Hamilton] original is featured in its first part. In the second part Mark brings in synths and Bembe Segue’s vocals, which give the track not only his personal trademark but also a new perspective with regard to the original. Find this on the *Impulsive!* remix compilation. *Jürgen von Knoblauch*

FURRY PHREAKS FEAT. TERRA DEVA ALL OVER THE WORLD Miso/UK/CD-R Once released, this tune will be heard all over the world! Charles Webster’s sound universe fits perfectly with Terra Deva’s voice. The instrumental’s elements leave enough space for the vocals to develop and support the flow of the lyrics in a great way. Groovy as hell! *Jürgen von Knoblauch*

PETE PHILLY & PERQUISITE AMAZED (SEIJI REMIX) Unexpected/NETH/CD-R Seiji has chosen to remix the last tune of Pete Philly & Perquisite’s debut album, *Mind.State*. On “Amazed,” the hip-hop duo from the Netherlands offers a track with a vibe similar to Mos Def’s “Umi Says.” Seiji kept the vibe and the arrangement from the original and added a beat that makes the remix essential for freestyle and house dancefloors. *Jürgen von Knoblauch*

TOSCA HEIDI BRÜHL (SA-RA REMIX) !K7/GER/12

Even with big names like Swag and Plantlife on this remix EP, SA-RA steals the show with their patented handclaps and stoned soul keyboards. The trio adds impressive live electric bass riffs, MPC drum breaks and swirling Rhodes to the hazy vocal track, which features Egyptian-Parisian Samiah Farah. Plantlife offers a laidback, extended funk remix, while Swag opts for a Chicago acid boogie number that was sound processed via Ableton Live. *Tomas*

MUDD & CHICO HAMILTON KERRY’S CARAVAN Rong/US/12

Paul “Mudd” Murphy (also of Aquaaba) hooks up with legendary jazz drummer Chico Hamilton for a brilliant slice of funk-fusion. Strictly on the downtempo tip, “Kerry’s Caravan” will remind of vintage Isaac Hayes or Cymande, with lush strings and an excellent soprano saxophone solo. Ray Mang contributes two different remixes to boot. *Derek Grey*

JUGOE THE RUSTBELT EP Bastard Jazz/US/12

An homage to America’s dying industrial states (Ohio, Indiana, Michigan), Jugoe’s latest EP on the always dope Brooklyn label Bastard Jazz is a far-reaching collection of uptempo and mid-tempo funk, boogie and downtempo beats. Nicodemus and Zeb take a crack at “Gooseme,” adding an NYC Afrobeat twist, while Beatphreak’s animated mix of “90 West” will have the broken headz nodding. The rest of the EP is cool like Kool & the Gang’s sure-fire funky beats. *Tomas*

IMMEDIATE ACTION 009 Hefty/US/12

This essential multi-artist release on Hefty explores intricate digital jazz in the vein of German labels –scape and Nonplace. Victor Bermon’s cool trio of space jazz meditations (“Yo, Girl,” “Interlude” and “Afternoon”) is joined by a b-side’s worth of tracks from Retina.IT and Samadha. The former delivers warm, clicky IDM suitable for adventurous dance spaces; the latter is fuzzy folk suitable for midday couch naps. *Derek Grey*

KELPE SUNBURNT EYELIDS DC/UK/12

Kel McKeown’s ‘04 debut album as Kelpie, *Sea Inside Body*, was a briny ocean soundtrack filled with gentle waves of ambient and downbeat sounds. This EP expands off that blueprint of IDM, dub, chill beats and underwater sound motifs. Truthfully, his sonic palette unfolds like a purple urchin, synthy tentacles floating and undulating in the dark. Kelpie makes charming and disconcerting mood music. *Tomas*

BASEHEADZ BASEHEADZ! Mental/NETH/12

Blink and you’ll miss this debut future jazz sleeper. Mental Recordings’ first offering is a confident affair from Satiesh Mathoera (Baseheadz), which plumbs the plethora of sounds heard on labels like Switzerland’s Straight Ahead or the UK’s Bitasweet. Sheer variety—from broken beat numbers like “Firewire” to sedate cool jazz tracks like “The Scratch Mechanic”—will satiate casual listeners and DJs equally. *Derek Grey*

SUN-RA STARDUST FROM TOMORROW Deja-Vu/ITA/CD

You’d think I’d be all over the supremely dancefloor-friendly broken beats of Yannah Valdevit’s Sun Ra remix, but such is not the case. While I’ll probably regret it after hearing Seiji smash it with that mix at Co-Op, I’m still vibing on Geraldo Frissina’s classy two takes of “Stardust...” His Dissociated mix conjures the spiritual jazz of Pharaoh Sanders and McCoy Tyner, while his Tomorrow mix adds a sashaying shaker and 4/4 house kick. Fantastic! *Tomas*

TRUE STORIES CRAZY GIRLS Non-Stop/UK/12

Here’s my pick of the issue—a leftfield pop EP that defies categories but seamlessly blends Phoebe Tolmer’s (Nouvelle Vague) emotive vocals with Nick “Boxsaga” Phillips’s nervous beats. Like the off-kilter balladry of Moloko, Tolmer weaves a mysterious, disjointed narration through foggy, nocturnal beats. Spektrum’s uptempo mix filters and flings the vocals too and fro in a frothy electrodisco mix. Essential. *Tomas*

MUNGO’S HIFI RASTA MEDITATION Scotch Bonnet/UK/10

Glasgow’s Mungo’s HiFi kick off their new Scotch Bonnet imprint with two cuts aimed at heating up the dance. “Rasta Meditation” is all chatty vocals that ride an undulating, danced up, Sly & Robbie style riddim, while the b-side cut, “Belly Ska,” is an irresistibly shuffling, bassed up ska tune. Like their compatriots Groove Corporation, Mungo’s HiFi manages to infuse heavy dub vibes with catchy dancefloor licks. *Matt Fisher*



REGGAE REWIND BY ROSS HOGG

THE HEARSAY AND DOWNLOW ON DANCEHALL, DUB, ROOTS AND LOVERS ROCK.

Every time I cull records for this column, I’m astounded not only by the sheer volume of music that one *liddle* island can produce, but also by the incredible reggae from countries other than Jamaica. Keeping up is a challenge (as Max Romeo sang 30 years ago, “*it sippie out deh*”), so the focus of this edition of Reggae Rewind is on roots music, old and new.

On the reissue tip, **Trojan** offers their 50th box set: *Reggae Rarities*, an incredible collection of 50 hard-to-find songs recorded between 1966 and 1978 from Jamaican and UK artists such as **Boris Gardiner & The Love People**, **Dave Barker** and **Delroy Wilson**. Another reggae rarity finally enjoying wider distribution is **Willi Williams’** masterpiece LP *Messenger Man*. Some 20 years before **Luciano** claimed the title of “The Messenger,” Williams (best known for his hit “Armageddon Time”) was toiling in relative obscurity on this album, recently reissued by Blood and Fire with eight previously unreleased dubs.

I was turned on to even more new music on a recent trip to my favorite local reggae store, **Wisdom Records**, (www.wisdomrecords.com), run by I-Vier and Irie Dole of the Bay Area’s champion sound, Jah Warrior Shelter HiFi. Selector I-Vier recently returned from a trip to Kingston and filled me in on the current boom tunes. **Gyptian** is hitting big with “Serious Times” (Frenz), a beautiful, plaintive call to consciousness over the sparse **Spiritual War** riddim (with bingi drumming by **Bongo Herman**); it also features a standout track called “Poverty” from a grade-schooler by the name of **OQ** (watch for this youth). Also busting big is the acoustic-only **Ghetto Strings** riddim (Flava Squad), with conscious tracks from

Sizzla, **Nitty Kutchie**, **Anthony Cruz**, **Lukie D** and more. **Perfect**, who had a huge hit with “Handcart Boy,” is back with his own riddim, **Giddimani** (Intouch Music), featuring stellar cuts from **Richie Spice**, **Anthony B** and newcomer **Mr. Fuze**.

I-Vier also told me about a new riddim out of New York: **Bloody Armageddon** (Jah Track Productions), a rootsy dancehall version based on the classic **Swing Easy** riddim and graced by **Yami Bolo** on the title track and the newly conscious **Spragga Benz** on “Rasta Call Us.” But Yankees aren’t the only ones getting in on the roots explosion. Trinidad’s **Marlon Asher** is making a huge impact with his “Ganja Farmer” (Caribbean Underground Productions), a song about an angry herbsman who shoots down weed-eradicating helicopters with his “stinkin’ rocket launcher.”

Not to be outdone, the UK recently dropped some heavyweight releases of its own. The Luciano-esque **Paul Elliott** hits big with his full-length release *Self Reliance* (**Stronger Production**), featuring the beautiful title track and several hard-hitting conscious tunes. Also out of the UK is “Up There,” the new 10” single from **The Bush Chemist** featuring **Kenny Knots** (**Lush Records**); the track is top-notch modern roots in the **Jah Shaka** tradition and Knots’ voice is a perfect fit.



POP ON TRIAL BY SARA SHERR & MARIA SCIARRINO

DANCING OUR WAY THROUGH THE INDIE POP AISLES IN RECORD STORE HEAVEN.

Philadelphia’s self-described bionic disco group **Kandy Whales** bridges the gap between sleek dancefloors and smoky rock clubs, and their unique sound found its way onto opening slots for **The Fiery Furnaces**, **Gogol Bordello** and **The Brazilian Girls**. Fittingly, they’re on tour with old Seattle friends **United States of Electronica**, which should be a traveling dance party if there ever was one. The Kandy Whales aren’t your average cocaine-sex-jam electroclash band. The three-song *Meltd Inside* EP showcases theatrical frontman **Clark Roth’s** sexy robot Bowie vocals, a noir-ish horn section, glitchy rhythms and spritely grooves. In conjunction with *Meltd Inside*, Philly drum & bass imprint **Gasm Records** will issue a vinyl remix of two new Kandy Whales tracks produced by **DStar**. For more info, check www.kandywhales.com.

No Wave trio **Glass Candy** can take covers by The Rolling Stones, Josie Cotton and Roxy Music and turn them inside out, thanks to the delivery of **Ida No**, which is part **Siouxie Sioux** and part Teenage Jesus and The Jerks-era **Lydia Lunch**. The *Iko* EP (Troubleman Unlimited) is a sharp contrast to the previous sound of their debut *Love Love Love*; *Iko* is like their “Heart of Glass.” The frequently covered Dixie Cups mid-’60s hit is transformed into two versions: a joyful acapella and then percolating electro-pop à la the **Tom Tom Club**. No’s emotive vocals return on “Sugar and Whitebread,” sounding like “Metro”-era **Berlin**.

By the time you read this, **Stereolab** will have released three new 7-inch singles (also available as downloads), returning to their first label **Too Pure** after being a casualty of last year’s Warner budget cuts. The first single, “Kyberneticka Babicka,” which, according to Pitchfork, is Czech for cybernetic granny, feels like *Pet Sounds* with **Nico** on vocals. The second is the lush soundscapes of “Plastic Mile” and the third, “Interlock,” is the closest the group gets to a swinging ‘60s rave-up. Like a delicious crepe, too much of a good thing is never enough.

Not much is known about **New Young Pony Club**, but their appearance on Radio One’s **Blue Room** has created much stir about their “The Get Go/Jerk Me” single on **Tirk Records**, which is like the soundtrack to world-weary New Wave girls on their night out: **ESG**-ish punk funk jams, New Order beats and a non-stop rolling bassline. I can’t wait to see what they’ll do next.

I have similar feelings about Stockholm trio **Revl9n**, whose two singles “Walking Machine” and “United” (both on Tornrantz rock ‘n’ roll) are somewhere between the day-glo pop of their fellow Swedes **The Sounds** and the sweet doom of **Garbage**. When their full-length hits the States, it could be a leftfield club hit or total domination. This isn’t likely when **Mariah Carey** rules the charts, but one can only dream, and sweet dreams are made of this.





LUCKY 13
BY TOPH ONE

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at www.fabric8.com/redwine. Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.

The alarm goes off early these days, half-past noon on Tuesdays, but it's all good. Seems I've gone and enrolled at City College of SF, or "Harvard on the Hill" as we grew up calling it, and I think I may have found my new home. I'll end up being one of those perma-students one usually finds at the university level—taking radio astronomy at 50 and Chinese pottery as an 89-year-old. I'm into it. It's my new calling. And I've got Ocean Avenue dialed: Los Americas for killer cheese tamales, Fruit Barn for my bananas and Ocean Cyclery for bike advice and friendly conversation. And to celebrate that extra-tough mid-term? Why, cocktails at the Avenue Club, of course! Sign me up, chancellor—I'm yours!

1) FATLIP THE LONELIEST PUNK (Delicious Vinyl/US/CD)

This cat has got to be the realest dude in the history of hip-hop. Listening to *The Loneliest Punk* is like reading his personal journals, albeit the inner thoughts of a young inner-city Hunter S. Thompson struggling with early fame, money woes and transsexual groupies. Just another twisted LA story, turned into a masterpiece in 'Lip's hands.

2) THE DWARVES "MUST REMIX" (SFTRI/US/12EP)

Pulsating dangerously between NIN's heaviness, full-throttle hardcore and industrial hip-hop, the enigmatic Dwarves are perhaps punk rock's worst-kept secret. "Massacre" is one of my new all-time faves, and "Fefu" kicks major ass as well. Don't sleep.

3) STROMBA "GIDDY UP" (FatCat/US/12)

A fine cadre of freaks led by DC Recordings' James Dyer and Tom Tyler, Stromba comes off like a hazy Liquid Liquid goofing off in the Black Ark studios. File next to Tortoise and Tussle, pour yourself some mushroom tea and enjoy.

4) CASUAL SMASH ROCKWELL (Hiero Imperium/US/CD-LP)

Cas comes through yet again, further expanding the impressive Hiero catalog and keeping his own distinctive style of Oakland funk flowing steady. Dig the keys and congas on "All Around the World" or the straight party-vibe of "I'll Hit That."

5) DNAE BEATS ETERNAL AUTUMN (247/US/LP)

From the old to the new, the Bay keeps busy. Young Dnae conjures some impressive sounds behind the boards on his debut wax—clearly raised on the hard SF sounds of IMP and Bored Stiff, he teams up with heavyweights from Project Blowed, Visionaries, Disflex6 and more for this shapeshifting sampler of his impressive skills.

6) KOUSHIK "BE WITH" (Stones Throw/US/12)

Relaxing snugly somewhere between Lush and Nobody, Koushik just became the second inhabitant of my "Warm Fuzzy" section at Open Mind Music. Don't be taken aback by the little fluffy clouds—this is sweet music to start the night or end the morning.

7) SERENGETI GASOLINE RAINBOWS (Day By Day/US/CD)

It's just wonderful when our crazy people end up with recording contracts instead of on the cold streets of Chicago. Part raw confessional

à la Rollins, part Kool Keith abstraction, with music that swings between G-Love ("Andromeda") and Whitesnake ("I Don't Mind") with a touch of Madness ("Borderline"). Viva the weird!

8) TOM VEK "I AIN'T SAYING MY GOODBYES"

(Startime/US/12)

Solid electro-tinged dance-rock from the Tummy Touch camp, enough to make any Rapture fan spill their vodka-cran on their stilettos.

9) TEN 12 SYSTEMS ANALOG ROOTS II-SWING THEORY

(Ten12/US/LP)

Fat, jazzy loops out of Brooklyn—check "Dustmitesoul" or "16th & Mission" for the flavor, and also keep an eye out for their old funk reissues on SoulLive such as the "She's the One" 45 by The Diplomats, a.k.a. the Skull Snaps!

10) DOUJAH RAZE DOUJAH RAZE (Trilogy/US/CD)

After bubbling around the underground for the past few years, Doujah is set to drop his debut full-length with production from Da Beatminerz, Double-J, Disco Dave and Shuko and more than a few cuts that make it a worthwhile purchase. "Irish Cream," "360," "Spinmata" and "Hard Times" are all bangers, and we hope to hear more from this VA native.

11) LAWLESS ELEMENT "RULES (PART 2)"

(BabyGrande/US/12)

Remember the first time you heard Mos Def's "If You Could Huh (You Could Hear)" and you just *knew* you were listening to something special? That's what Lawless Element sounds like. Detroit, once again making big noise.

12) WORDSWORTH SURGERY "LARGE SCALE" EP

(Down+Out/UK/12EP)

Another wayward wanderer found his way to the Red Wine Social and dropped this one in my bag. Hot beats, good UK raps. Find it.

LUCKY 13) BENJAMIN GUEDEL BLOOD SWEAT & TEARS

(Die Gestalten Verlag/GER/book)

Killer art and illustration for the Kozik/tattoo art/Frank Miller crowd. Pirates, boobs and noir themes abound. What's not to love?



Dnae Beats



Tom Vek



Casual



The Dwarves



Koushik

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"Existing in a chilled-out space between Roy Ayers and Digable Planets circa Street Cred, West Oaktown is indeed cool like that." - UR5

"Scat-rapping, laid back funk, shimmering speakeasy jazz, crispy slow-galled percussion, it's like the Roots reworking Organix, but with actual chops this time. Or yesterday's New Guinea playing only the Blurt Notes from the most Digable Planets. Stone Thrope is kicking themselves in the wolf mask for missing this." - J-LITER

"These parties for the 90's vibe, the comfort zone where jazz and hip hop converge, will get with this. Consistency and depth are your credentials for this two-disc set the second of being a strong offering of imaginative releases." - STRAIGHT NO CHASER

"Bring it! Techno-organic jazz-hop has met its master in Colossus, whose music sounds like a mutant-powered, sonic version of the Marvel X-Men character." - XLBNN



Featuring "The Tribute"
(12" single) as heard on Mark Farina's Mushroom Jazz 5.
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VIS-ED: JEREMY FISH

A snarky skater journeys to where the wild things are.

WORDS: TYRA BANGS IMAGES: JEREMY FISH



ABOVE:
Custom skateboards
“Skullship” and
“Humpston Tribute”
RIGHT:
Exclusive piece for
XLR8R Vis-Ed Series

Jeremy Fish inhabits a world of rats shaped like grenades, trees with breasts and skull-shaped hot air balloons. That is to say that his art mixes violence and vice with resolutely cute elements. Highbrow stuff this ain't—Fish's work is a direct reflection of his love for nature, roadtrips, dirty jokes, women and, above all, skateboarding really fast down San Francisco's steep hills.

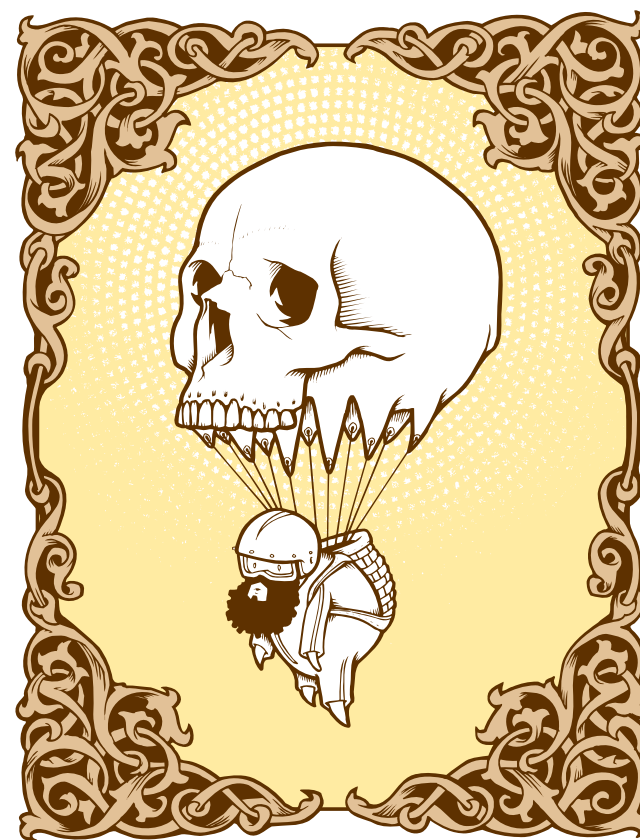
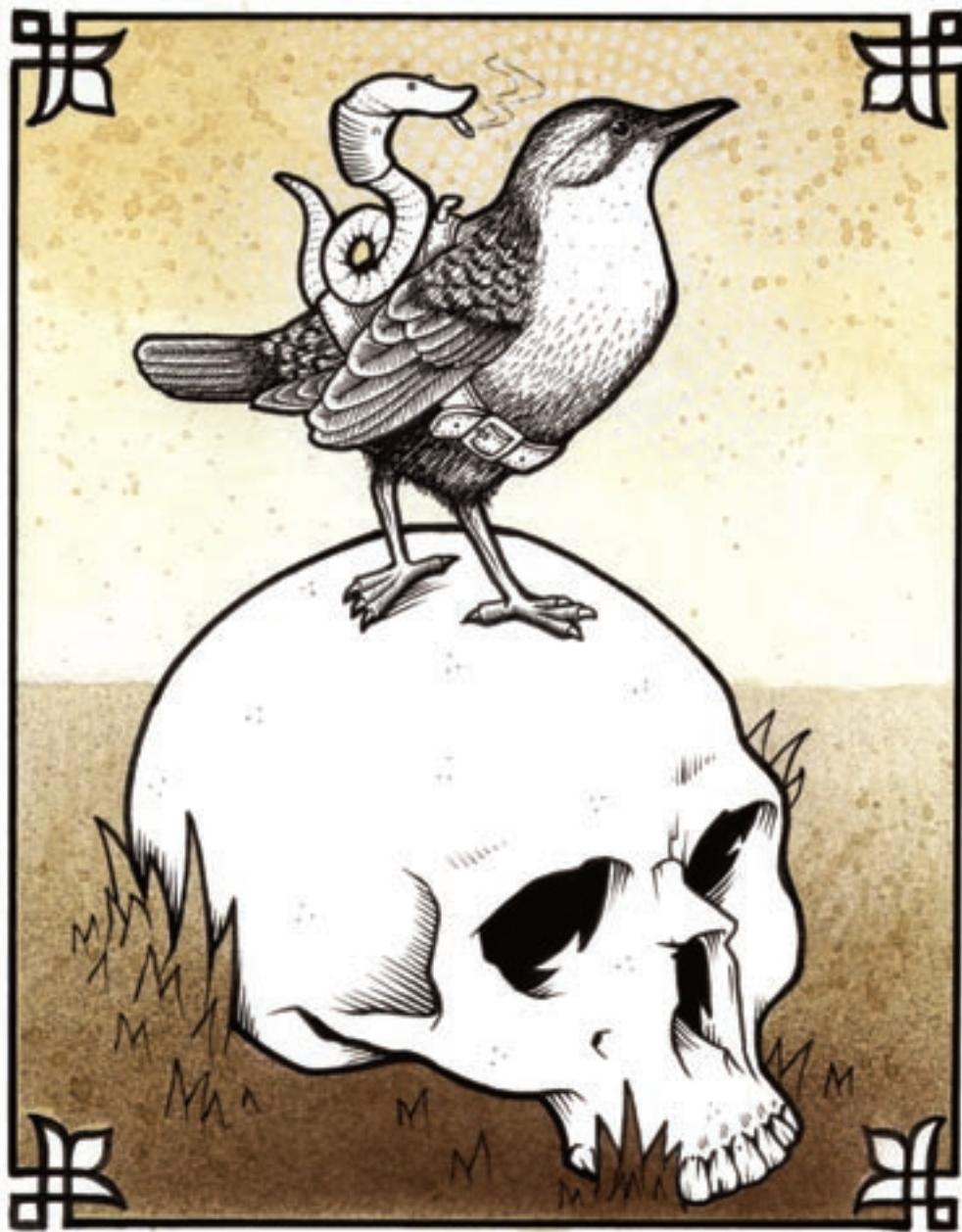
Fish grew up in upstate New York but headed west in 1994 to attend San Francisco's Art Institute. Nurtured by the close proximity of beautiful vistas, gut-busting burritos and peep shows at the Lusty Lady, he refined his bold, confident pen strokes and his repertoire of skulls, bunnies and camper vans with wings. His knack for creating self-assured, iconic images landed him a job as art director at Think Skateboards. It also led to a monthly illustrated series known as “The Big Stupid” for skateboard bible

Slap Magazine; the project found him collaborating with Andy Howell, Bigfoot and Pushead, among others.

When he's not helping his “top secret” Silly Pink Bunnies gang—whose logo, a bunny with a shaka handsign for a face, is festooned all over the Bay—Fish keeps super busy churning out paintings, illustrations, sculptures, toys (his plastic bunny van is available at www.strangeco.com) and eye-popping decks for The Unbelievers, a company he co-owns with skate rogue Scott Bourne. Upon the release of his latest endeavor, a book for Upper Playground called *I'm With Stupid*, we decided to ask Fish a few questions. We found him in the Zurich airport hungover from fondue and Schnapps, but he took the time to give us a few of the quick and mysterious quips he's known for.

www.silypinkbunnies.com





What's the last great book you read?

Hell's Angels by Hunter S. Thompson. It rocked. I heard they kicked his ass afterward. I don't read much. It hurts.

If you could have a superpower, which one would you want and why?

Super "show me your boobs guy": the overwhelming superpower to prompt women of all ages to display their breasts in said superhero's general direction.

What is your favorite music to make out to?

The ocean.

What's the best skateboard trick you can do?

Ruining my body.

What's the most important thing you learned in art school?

Talking shit, ignoring art kooks.

Do you feel like art school helped, hurt, or had no effect on the art you make?

It helped my work ethic, and hurt my view of art, artists and the formal art world.

What's your favorite thing going on in skateboard deck design right now?

Matt Irving from Delphi Collective and Todd Bratrud (Consolidated/Burlesque Design) pretty much. Chris Wright is also amazing.

You live in the Bay Area so you must have some good slang. What are you known for saying all the time?

Skin up, nice one, anything.com/whatever.

It appears you like road trips and camper vans. Tell us a good road trip story.

I once drove a 30-year-old van around the country with my dad. I took him to North Dakota, which was his 50th state, and got a photo of him

holding up the five-zero handsignal in front of the state sign. I love driving around the U.S. I try to do it every other year or so.

What are you really into drawing right now?

Animals. Rival animals that by nature oppose each other. Predators and shit. The sheep and the wolf, the worm and the bird and so on. But they are pals—promoting romance and shit. And some skulls. They're scary.

Throwing the goat, flipping the bird or peace sign?

Flipping the bird with all four paws.

What is your favorite medium?

Pen and paper. Micron pens and Bristol board mainly.

What's the biggest hurdle you've had to get over in your career?

People in my life. People who can't support me

and what I'm doing. This is a pretty lonely road.

What is the idea behind *The Unbelievers* and how did you come up with the name?

My partner Scott Bourne came up with the name. It means believe in nothing. Don't follow what you are told, don't be a sheep. We are a small skateboard mega-corporation. It's a lot of fun. Skateboarding is supposed to be, I think.

What's your favorite secret spot in San Francisco?

The Rite Spot...but please don't go there.

How do you feel living in San Francisco influences your art?

Infinitely. Between the sick-ass psychedelic hippie heritage, the foundations of modern street skateboarding, the hills, the beach, the park, my friends, fecalface.com, Upper Playground, medicinal grass, my little shack in the avenues and all the amazing women that are probably somebody's girl.

Name one piece by one artist that has had a profound effect on you and why.

Everything by Will Barras. He's an amazing illustrator/painter dude from London who works in a real assembly line technique, making lots of pieces in the time it takes to make one. He's really unique.

What was the initial concept behind "*The Big Stupid*" series that you did for *Slap Magazine* and how did it change over time?

I wanted to make a comic that had to do with skateboarding with little to no text. I also wanted to collaborate with other artists I admired. It just got weirder, and after three years they cut me off. I still love *Slap* and Mark and Joe.

What movie character do you most identify with?

The Dude. Jeff Lebowski [from *The Big Lebowski*].

What are some of your upcoming projects?

I am working on some animation projects, a shitload of art shows and as much traveling as I can manage. I am also working on skinning up the biggest I've ever skinned. I also plan on working myself to an early grave, as I really love my job.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

"Worm"
Theodore team deck
"Vampire"
"Blue"

THIS PAGE:

"Parachute"
Car team deck
"Skullbunny"



OPENSOURCED

REMIXING WAR AND RACE WITH ROB SWIFT AND DJ SPOOKY.

WORDS: SCOTT THILL ILLUSTRATION: DAVID CLARK

The thought of talking politics, tech and turntablism with DJ Spooky (a.k.a. Paul D Miller) and Rob Swift sounded like an innocent enough proposition in the formative stages. But as the date for the meeting of the minds crept closer, so did the anniversary of 9/11. Then Hurricane Katrina changed the game even further. Both artists' new works (Swift's *War Games* audio/DVD release and DJ Spooky's forthcoming *Rebirth of a Nation*, a sound/image remix of D.W. Griffith's 1915 canonical yet utterly racist film *Birth of a Nation*) provide vital street-level critiques of the US's social and political climate. *XLR8R* asked these two deck futurists to discuss their art and views.

Have 9/11 and the Katrina natural disaster influenced your recent work?

RS: 9/11 impacted me immensely, to the point that I fell into a deep depression and didn't feel like working on music or anything else. But in order to get out of it, I made *War Games*. I realized that I could speak just like a Chuck D or KRS-One with my turntable. And I think that's something that DJs haven't fully tapped into yet. Before 9/11, most of us were just showing off our skills. Very few of us have taken the time to express ourselves socially and politically.

PM: At this point, we have to get some different messages out. This is about information, and turntablism has become a kind of underground news system getting that information out to the people.

RS: *War Games* is looking to increase awareness about what's going on around us, but it is done through the eyes of a DJ, so those who are into Spooky, Q-Bert, Mix Master Mike and the rest

will be able to appreciate it. And there's a DVD filled with images and speeches that inspired the music, so you're getting both the audio and visual components.

Which relates back to something that you wrote in *Rhythm Science*, Paul, about the DJ being a media entity unto himself or herself.

PM: Yeah, to me the DJ is the new media. And what we're seeing right now with people like Rob and myself making their own media is just the latest in a long line of artists doing the same. *War Games* is updating the way hip-hop tells stories, the same way I'm doing with my film *Rebirth of a Nation*. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* was propaganda, but was also the first film played for the White House. It was also a work of propaganda used to recruit members for the KKK.

It revitalized the Klan, which at the time had been seriously on the wane.

PM: Exactly. It was played at Klan rallies to get them to believe in a false version of American history, much in the same way 9/11 footage is being used. *Birth of a Nation* was the first film on that level to play games with perception, even down to race: The major black characters were actually played by whites in blackface.

Have we reached a point where musicians aren't just releasing music, but instead an entire sensorium of content?

RS: Absolutely.

PM: I was thinking about this after listening to Rob's album. Rob, you should take your scratches and release them all on iTunes as acapellas,

so that people could download and remix them. That'd be ill.

RS: Yeah man, it would. Spooky came up with the idea! (Laughs). I decided to take the images that inspired me to make *War Games* and build a DVD out of them. That's the beauty of technology: You don't have to have millions of dollars to make a short film like that.

PM: With *Rebirth of a Nation*, I'm remixing Griffith's film live every time off of Pioneer DVJs. So I'm making a remix by applying DJ technique to film. And when I release the DVD, I'm going to have remixable elements of it online that DJs can download. I can only imagine the copyright clearance issues.

RS: Fuck it!

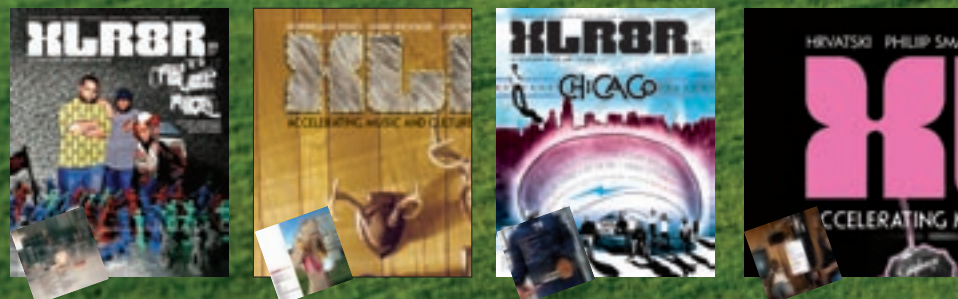
PM: *Birth of a Nation* is now copyright-free, so what I'm trying to do by remixing it is think about how artists make a statement about open-sourcing everything from art to software. People come after you over the slightest thing nowadays. I've never been sued. Have you?

RS: Not yet. Which is another reason that I feel like *War Games* is important. I don't really think there are too many people that actively seek out and share information. It's important to expose yourself to it all.

Read an extended remix of this conversation at www.xlr8r.com.
www.djspooky.com www.robswift.com

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